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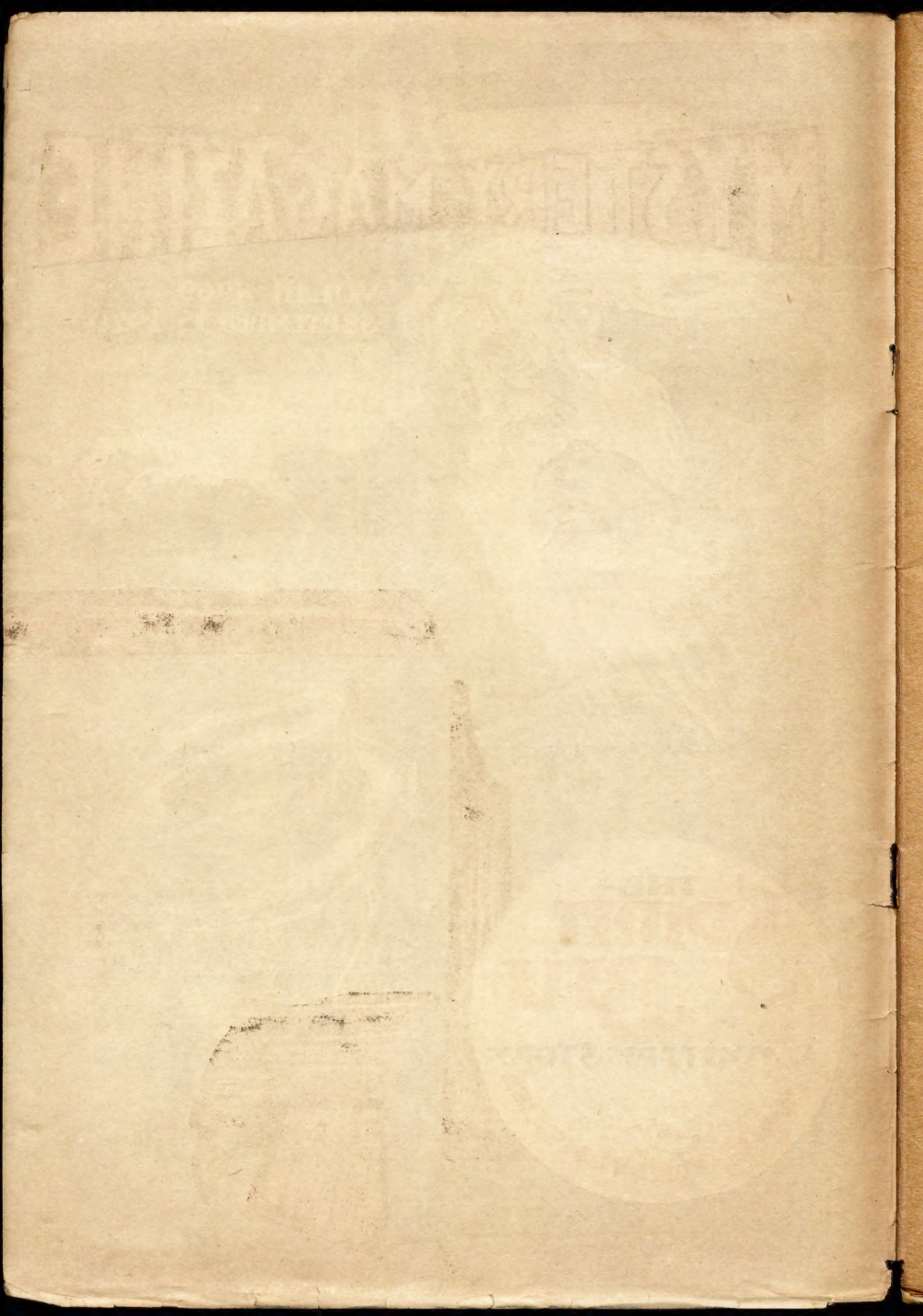
THE SPIRIT BELL

A MYSTERY STORY

BY CHARLES · FULTON · OURSLER



"The House Behind the Wall," by Julian Darrow, in Our Next Issue.

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THE SPIRIT BELL

A MYSTERY STORY

By CHARLES FULTON OURSLER

CHAPTER ONE.

ONLY one train stops at Buckeystown a day. There is only one street in the place, one general store, one church and one institution popularly designated by the populace as a hotel. In all its traditions and equipment it conforms to the specifications of a "one horse town."

Dare Allan, from the big city, garbed in Fifth Avenue raiment, carrying a fifty-dollar grip, and aghast at the prospect of passing an entire twenty-four hours in Buckeystown, alighted from the one train, made his way down the one street, inhibited the general store and lone steeple, and made his way into the dingy interior of the one hotel. There he asked for a room. The shriveled old hotelkeeper squinted at him over his glasses, wrinkled his nose and spat into a sawdust box.

"Sorry, young feller," he declared, "but this here hostelry is bulging with traffic now. There's a conference meeting here this week of Methodist ministers and the only place I know of for rent is a private box in the postoffice!"

Convinced that this was a tremendously comical thrust, the old fellow nearly doubled across the counter in his mirth. But it was far from funny to Dare Allan. He had already learned there were no trains out of Buckeystown until the following morning.

"May I check my grip here for an hour or so?" he inquired. "I came down here to see a man on business, and I want to see him as soon as I can. I'll be back in a little while."

"Sure!" agreed the hotelkeeper affably. "Who was you thinkin' of seein'?"

"Mr. Brasier," answered Dare.

The ancient hotelkeeper sucked in his teeth and whistled.

"Be you here to see—oh gee, oh gosh; oh gosh, oh gee!" He looked at Dare as if he were a phenomenon. Finally he said, "You go right down Main street until you get to a yaller house with a broken-down porch. And may God be with ye!"

This final expression came from the man's lips with the emphasis of a benediction pronounced over a condemned man. Dare wondered what he meant by it. But the old man's manner forebade questions; suddenly he had drawn into himself like a turtle withdrawing its head, and Dare, after depositing his bag, stepped again into Main street.

Less than five minutes' walk down its tree-bowered walk brought him to a dwelling which unmistakably identified itself with the hotelkeeper's description. Its warting, cracking paint was undoubtedly of a remote yellow ancestry, and no man would deny that its porch was broken down. The shutters flopped upon rusty, broken hinges; the boards were splitting and jagged, and the entire aspect of the house was of confirmed seediness.

This was a surprise to Dare Allan, for he had come to Buckeystown for an interview with a man whom he had been led to hold in high respect. That he should exist within the walls of such a place struck him as queer. With some hesitation, therefore, he stepped gingerly across the shaking boards of the porch which had long since collapsed, and rapped briskly.

It was necessary for Dare to rap three times, growing louder at each assault until at last he was pounding with his fists before he got results.

Suddenly the door was drawn quickly back, and the face of an old man peered out at him. It was the most extraordinarily frightful face Dare had ever beheld. It was a greenish-white, overgrown with long, tangled white beard, and the eyes, deeply sunken in hollow sockets, burned with a spectral, blazing animosity.

The apparition uttered no word. It simply stared in hard fury at Dare—and the interval seemed endless before the startled young man regained his courage and his voice.

"Is this Mr. Brasier?" he asked diffidently.

"What do you want?" snarled back the man, exposing a horrid row of yellow teeth.

"I am Dare Allan. You remember the correspondence you have had with the Volta Recording Company regarding your new inventions? I am the agent you have been expecting regarding——"

"My inventions!" broke in the old man with a yell of rage. "You dare to come here and talk about my inventions! You cursed little whippersnapper, you! You impudent jackal! You infidel! I'll kill you!"

Away from the door he vanished for a moment, reappearing with an old-fashioned vase in his hand. Glaring madly, he drew back his arm as if to hurl it at Dare's head. But Dare had not moved. He merely stood his ground and stared back defiantly at the strange behavior of the man.

Suddenly the old man jumped back, slammed shut the door, and Dare heard him fastening a clinking iron chain.

Red with embarrassment and anger, Dare turned and retraced his way back down to the sidewalk. He was stunned at what had happened. More than five hundred miles from Broadway he had come, bent on business with Didymus Brasier of Buckeystown. The interview had all been arranged by correspondence, and Dare had made the journey, anticipating nothing but a haggle over terms. So sudden and unexpected had the interview been that he could scarcely bring himself to believe it was true. And the more he did realize that it was true, the redder and angrier he got. So he stumbled down Main street, without looking where he was going.

That was how it happened that he brushed against some one and knocked an armful of packages to the sidewalk. Instantly recalled to himself, he turned to look at a girl, who was regarding him with a mixture of vexation and amusement. She was gloriously lovely—so much Dare noticed, even in his confusion, as he stooped and began recovering two loaves of bread, a can of baked beans, a can of preserved pineapples, and a miscellaneous assortment of other household purchases which he, in his blind forward action, had hurled at her feet. And as he stacked them, one by one, back in her arms, and mumbled and spluttered foolish words of apology, he noticed that her level blue eyes had a way about them unlike the moon-eyes he knew in and out of cabarets; that the womanly dressing of her chestnut hair in its simple coils out-did any that he had observed above roof-garden tables; that the vivid pink of her cheeks was not for sale in any cosmetic shop on Fifty-seventh street, and that the pliant grace of her form was her own, as God had fashioned it for her.

To his unsophisticated, metropolitan eyes she was a vision of a new kind of beauty. And it knocked his Rialto dignity to a fade-out.

"I am very sorry," he found himself gargling. "I didn't look where I was going!"

She smiled at him brightly.

"I noticed you didn't. Better say thanks that Mr. Brasier didn't throw that thing at you after all!"

"You saw it, then!" he said. "What's the matter with him? Is he insane?"

A pained look, as if she were very sorry for old man Brasier, came and went across her face.

"I don't think so," she answered. "He is only—very strange—and he often acts queerly, though I have never seen him act as raging as that before, and I have lived here all my life. Both he and his brother are queer—but his brother is never violent."

"His brother—is there another Brasier in

town?" faltered Dare, afraid to hope for an affirmative answer.

"Why, surely. That man you have just talked to is Septimus Brasier. His brother, Didymus, lives just across the way—in that green-and-white cottage!"

Dare could have kissed her. He could have kissed her under any circumstances, if she would have let him, but now he almost kissed her, willy-nilly. He was not beaten after all. He hadn't come to see that infernal old curmudgeon anyhow. He had come down here to see Didymus, not Septimus Brasier.

"Miss," said Dare gratefully, "I don't know you, but I'm a thousand times obliged to you. Really, you've done me a great favor. If you'll just let me know who you are, I'll send you a box of Mary Elizabeths, or a bunch of violets, or something!"

Rosily she flushed at his words and her eyes sparkled—and then suddenly the roses faded and the sparkle died. A single solemn note of a bell sounded from the village steeple. It seemed to terrify the girl. A frightened, almost a haunted, soul looked out from her eyes. She turned and without a word walked swiftly away. And Dare could have sworn that she was fighting back tears.

Dare hoped that he would meet her again. But meanwhile, he had Didymus Brasier on his mind. And, hoping devoutly that Didymus *was*, as the girl had indicated, different from his stormy-hearted brother, Dare crossed the street and mounted the neatly kept front of the green-and-white cottage. He found an electric bell there, and when he rang it, he had not long to wait. Another old gentleman, vastly different, opened the door.

He was what a woman would call a dear old man. There was that paternal grace about him that seemed to breathe the spirit of kindness. He, too, was bearded, but the white hairs, falling down over his stiff, old-fashioned boiled shirt bosom, was like a snowy cascade. His face was firm, yet tender and wistful, and his eyes were beaming at his visitor, to whom he extended his hand.

"You are Mr. Dare Allan, from the Volta Recording Laboratories, I presume," he began, in measured, mellow tones.

"Yes, sir!" replied Dare briskly. "I'm a little late, but I had——"

"Never mind! Come right in. We'll get down to business immediately. I won't keep you waiting," promised Didymus Brasier, as still clasping Dare's hand he drew him into the hallway. "Come this way."

He opened a door, and let Dare into the strangest room he had ever entered. Dare saw at once that its ceiling was artificial; that a lower ceiling, sloping upward like the sound box of a phonograph, had been built in under the original. All the walls were covered with black velvet, which gave the chamber a solemn not to say a sinister appearance. To find such a place in such a homely little village was to Dare a startling surprise. A quick glance around the room showed him that there was no furniture except an upright cabinet, the front hung with black velvet curtains, and two chairs.

"I would offer you a cigar," apologized Didymus Brasier, "except that the functions of this room make it impossible. There must be no smoke here. Sit down!"

Dare seated himself, while the old man stepped to the cabinet, drew back one of the hangings and thrust in his head. Presently he returned to the center of the room and faced Dare, a strange light kindling in his eyes.

"Imagine a great forest—miles and miles of trees—and no living soul near by," he began. "A tree falls. Is there any sound as it crashes to the ground?"

He blinked at Dare and waited for an answer.

"I—I—well, I don't know—certainly there would be a sound," returned Dare.

"How do you know? The dictionary tells you that sound is the sensation produced by the organs of hearing. If there was no organs of hearing—is there anything to hear? As in our forest, for example?"

Dare looked blankly at his host. It was a question which he had not studied in his physics course.

"Let that pass," resumed the old man. "I must tell you other things, more important. One is that presently I expect to be murdered!"

"Murdered? You——"

"Aye! At least, I shall die soon. I am too feeble to struggle against fate—Kismet! as they say in the east, where men are wiser than we. And what I do, I must do quickly. You are here because the heads of your firm feel that some of my experiments and inventions, of which I have written them, may be of value to them commercially. I doubt it, my boy. But I had a deep and great reason for wishing someone to come here and see what I have to show.

"Now, listen to me! You have seen a camera. What does it accomplish?"

"It makes a photograph," returned Dare wonderingly.

"Exactly. What the eye beholds, it records. And you have heard a phonograph? What does it accomplish?"

"It records sounds."

"Precisely. What the ear hears, it records. But, son, have you never thought that sight and hearing are but two of man's five senses? What of taste, smell, touch? Cannot their impressions also be recorded?"

Dare began to wonder if Didymus Brasier were any saner than his brother Septimus.

"I don't quite follow you," he admitted.

"Go look into that cabinet!"

Dare obeyed willingly, for he had a great curiosity regarding its uses. It was solidly built of rosewood, and its three walls and floor and ceiling were put together with fine craftsman-

ship and beautifully polished. Eagerly he thrust back the hangings.

Utter blackness at first confronted him. But as he stared into its gloomy, cavern-like depth, he discerned that the side walls, ceiling and floor sloped inward, and that at its heart far in the rear there was a motor-like arrangement, with an intricate, dimly discerned mechanism of wheels, lenses and lights. What were its uses he could not imagine.

"Now come here," bade Brasier. "Stand beside me—bring your hand here, and pass it over my right cheek, so—my left cheek, so—my nose, so—now my forehead—now my beard!—good! Catch my hand, rub your fingers over its joints, its knuckles, its palms—good! Now, put your nose close to the lapel of my coat and smell the rose! Thank you!"

There was no doubt of it. Dare was convinced that Didymus Brasier was a lunatic.

"Go stand in the cabinet now," commanded the old scientist, "and close your eyes. Under no circumstances open your eyes until I tell you!"

Obediently, Dare stepped into the cabinet, observing that the old man strode by the window, several yards away from him. Then Dare closed his eyes.

For a moment or two nothing happened. Then he heard a click, and he knew that the old man had pressed a button somewhere. Instantly a whirring of many small wheels sounded behind him, a continuous clicking, and a shudder ran through the framework of the cabinet. The air in the cabinet was stirred as by a mighty fan.

Slowly Dare began to realize that something was happening. Though he faithfully kept closed his eyes, as he had promised, he seemed to sense a presence near him in the cabinet, and to his nostrils came the faint odor of a rose.

"Don't open your eyes," cautioned Brasier, "but stretch forth your hand and move it gently about."

Dare stretched forth his hand and it met empty air. He moved it about and then—a horrifying chill coursed through his veins, and his hair stiffened with fear. He knew that Brasier was at the other end of the room—yet his hand touched warm flesh!

"Don't be afraid!" crooned the old man. "Grasp it. It is a human hand!"

It was a human hand, and its fingers closed round Dare's hand in a strong grip. The young man shuddered with a fear he could not control.

"Rub your fingers over its joints! Touch its knuckles; its palm! It is *my hand* you hold, my boy—and I am over here at the window!"

Dare tried to speak, but only inarticulate sounds came from his throat. He longed to open his eyes and look, but he had made his promise and he kept it.

"You doubt me," reproached the old man. "Dear, dear! Run your hand up the arm—feel the folds of the sleeve—smell the lapel, son—now to the face—the beard—the nose—the right cheek—the left cheek—ah! Open your eyes!"

Again the click as a button was pressed; the slow whirring down of the wheels of the strange mechanism, and Dare opened his eyes. He was alone in the cabinet. Didymus Brasier was still standing, impassive, but his eyes glittering in triumph, at the other end of the room.

"Startled?" he asked eagerly, as Dare leaped from the cabinet, and stood dazed and shaken, before him. "You have seen but a trifle of what you shall see—tomorrow. You have tired me—you must go. But I tell you this, my boy—with that cabinet, I have given a blessing to mankind. When it is completed the science of crime detection will be upon a new plane—for unerringly it will hound out the murderer and bring him to the chair. One thing I need—one thing—and because I fear I shall die without it, I have sent for you. Go now! Come to see me tomorrow morning and you shall hear all about it. Good-day, my boy!"

All that Dare could say was perfunctory. He was too shaken by the singular exhibition he had witnessed to feel quite himself. Like a man moving in a haze, a mist, he bade good-by to Didymus Brasier, heard the door close behind him, and stepped back on the sidewalk.

But, upset though he was, he noted one circumstance. Across the street was the house of Septimus Brasier. At one of the windows of that house was Septimus Brasier himself—and he was mouthing and cursing like a madman. When he saw Dare, he jerked down a curtain which shut his view.

CHAPTER TWO

AS Dare Allan made his way down Main—and only—street, he took stock of his experiences during the last hour and a half, and he was forced to admit that, for speed, Buckeystown was going some.

He had found the place so popular that he couldn't get a room in the hotel.

He had called upon an elderly gentleman who had threatened him murderously.

He had encountered as winsome and lovely a young lady as ever he had set eyes upon, and when he made one little gallant remark, a bell had sounded and she had turned from him, almost in dread, with tears in her eyes.

He had met another elderly gentleman who had accomplished apparently impossible things, and calmly stated that he expected shortly to be murdered.

Finally he had emerged to the street to behold elderly gentleman Number One acting like a madman at the window.

While strolling slowly amidst these interesting reflections, Dare had another item added to the list of his experiences. He saw old Septimus Brasier emerge from his yellow painted shack, hatless, with his gray hair blown by the wind, and, casting furtive glances behind him, cross

the street hastily and hurry up the steps of the green-and-white cottage. He rang the bell and presently disappeared within the doors.

Dare Allen wished that he might find some reasonable explanation of these unusual occurrences before he left the town. But just at present he was faced with a more immediate responsibility. He had to find a place to spend the night.

There was a crowd in the hotel "lobby" when he reappeared and asked for his bag, and all of the Buckeystown natives eyed him with undisguised curiosity. When he asked the tavern keeper if he could suggest any possible place for a night's lodging, many edged nearer, and one young fellow in a checked suit, pink shirt, yellow tie and heliotrope hosiery piped up shrilly:

"Say, city feller! Why don't you go down to Dr. Lake's—the village dentist? He's taking in boarders now and he might be glad to get ye."

Dare accepted the suggestion gratefully. Receiving minute and detailed directions how to get to the dentist's house, which was less than a city block down Main street, he hurried out, and presently found himself knocking at the door of a neat little home, which was beginning to exhibit evidences of seediness. His knock was answered by a motherly-faced middle-aged woman, who smiled pleasantly when Dare stated his business.

"I will show you a room," she agreed and stood back for him to enter. On the second floor, at one end of the house, she offered him a homelike little bedroom, with old-fashioned walnut bed and snowy coverings. Dare took it without asking the price, and Mrs. Lake told him that dinner would be ready within an hour. Whistling happily, Dare turned to his bag.

At the dinner table Dare encountered the first of a series of surprises that were to be his that evening. The girl he had met on the street was seated next to him at the table!

Mrs. Lake introduced him to all around the dinner board, and the girl came last, but it was she for whom Dare was waiting all during his smiling acknowledgements. Her name, he learned, was Lorna—Lorna Lake, and she was the daughter of Dr. Lake. She blushed guiltily when their eyes met, and then became very pale, and all throughout the meal was very silent.

Of the others, members of the family and boarders, Dare found but two who claimed his attention. One was a man with a hump on his back. He was a pale-faced chap, with staring blue eyes behind large spectacles, and his ears were perched wide at a sharp angle. He had a peering, wistful expression, and when he spoke, which was seldom, Dare noticed that his voice was singularly penetrating and musical. What struck Dare most of all was that the humpbacked man, who was introduced as John Kramer, was exceedingly attentive to Lorna, and that most of the time he was looking at her.

The other in whom Dare was peculiarly interested was Dr. Lake himself. He was a large, full-blooded man, rather inclined to be boisterous, and loquacious. He talked all during the meal and yet he managed to devour great quantities of Mr. Lake's excellent, down-home cooking. Covertly appraising him throughout the meal, Dare wondered how such a crude man could have been the father of such an exquisite girl as Lorna.

It was not until dinner was over and the dishes borne away by Lorna and her mother, that Dare received the second surprise. He had not forgotten that single, solitary note of the steeple bell which had so startled Lorna, and he was determined to try to find an explanation of it. When he found himself seated with Dr. Lake and Kramer, under the glow of the dining-room oil lamp, he asked:

"Does your steeple bell toll the hours for you? The reason that I ask——"

He stopped, astonished at the impression the simple question had produced. Dr. Lake had shot a suspicious glance at him and then darted a short look of horror at Kramer.

"The bell is never rung," answered the dentist, rather rudely.

"But it rang today," retorted Dare.

"I told you! I told you!" cried Kramer. "I heard it too!"

"Well, I didn't hear it, and no one else seems to have heard it, and I don't believe a word of it anyway," snapped Dr. Lake. "I wouldn't like to think that bell rang!"

"But it did!" Dare assured him. More than ever he felt convinced there was some mystery connected with the bell. "It was a single, sonorous note, about four o'clock this afternoon. I heard it distinctly. Why—if I may inquire—is the bell never rung?"

Silence settled on them before his question was noticed. Dare began to wonder if they would ignore it altogether. He saw glances pass between Lake and Kramer, and finally the latter spoke.

"You may not believe it when you hear it," he warned, "but remember, you have asked for the story. Have you never heard of the Brasier murders?"

"No!"

"They were national sensations—and national enigmas," declared Lake, as if local pride found the crimes a proper object of veneration. "And they have never been solved."

"Never," repeated Kramer. "It all happened about twenty years ago—I remember it as a boy. One mellow June afternoon the town people were startled to hear the booming of the steeple bell. As it was only rung on Sundays, morning and evening, they could not understand why it should be ringing—the sexton least of all. Strange to say, when the old sexton reached the belfry, the bell was just ceasing its reverberations, there was no one near by, and all the doors were locked, just as he had left them. He called assistance and a thorough search was made. If you will look some time, you will see that the steeple

is so narrow, that there is no place for a man to hide—and no way for anyone to escape without being seen. Yet the bell had rung, and there seemed no way for it to have been accomplished. The town people stayed up late discussing it—and about ten o'clock that night it was discovered that Hobart Brasier, who was a lawyer, had been found in his library. On his forehead there was a red splotch, like a blot of red ink! Poisoned!"

The mellow cadence of Kramer's voice ceased and there was silence in the room.

"And you associate the bell ringing with that poisoning?" asked Dare incredulously.

"Wait!" was Lake's solemn adjuration, and Kramer continued:

"At the same hour on the following evening the bell rang again. And, as before, an unavailing search was made of the belfry. Nothing was found. But later that evening the body of Mrs. Hobart Brasier was found, fallen by the coffin of her husband. She, too, was dead—and on her brow was the sinister red splotch!"

A chill of horror ran down Dare Allan's spine. It was a weird story that he was hearing, yet he felt sure it was superstition; nothing more.

"And again!" sounded Kramer's voice, "on the third evening came the solemn tolling of the bell. That night they found the body of Mrs. Brasier's sister, Mary Raleigh, dead in her home, with the red mark of murder on her forehead. And still they found no one in the belfry!

"That was the end of the Brasier murders," concluded Kramer, "and since that time the steeple bell has never been run again—until this afternoon," he added meaningly.

Dr. Lake glanced at him uneasily.

"I'm going over for a chat with Didymus Brasier," he said uncertainly. "I don't think he should be alone!"

And then, like a flash, came the memory back to Dare of what the old man had said. He expected to be murdered—and no power on earth could save him! He wondered if he should speak out—and then he thought better of it and kept his own counsel. So he said nothing, and the doctor departed.

Deep, sonorous, unearthly, it clanged its metal of the family left?" inquired Dare, turning to Kramer.

"I believe so. There are no others in the—*hush!*"

Bong! Bong! Bong!

It was the tolling of the death bell.

Deep, sonorous, unearthly, it clanged its metal tongue on the stillness of the quiet village evening.

"As sure as there is a God in heaven, someone is being murdered at this instant!" cried Kramer, his face white with fear.

They stared at each other in blank horror, as the last of the great tones of the bell died away. Then the door was flung back, and Dr. Lake, his florid face like a napkin, reeled in.

"You heard it?" he gasped. "The bell rang!"

"Hush!" said Kramer. "Hear that!"

The notes of the bell were dead, but the stillness was broken again—shattered like the thrust of a blade by a shrill scream of mortal fear and pain. It was the death shriek—and the voice was that of an old and feeble man!

The threat of the spirit bell was being fulfilled!

CHAPTER THREE

WITH one accord the three men rushed into the moonlit street and dashed eastward. Before them lay two houses, in one of which they were convinced lay the tragedy. One was the yellow cottage of Septimus Brasier. One was the green-and-white cottage of his brother Didymus.

By common consent they went first to the house of Septimus, and banged recklessly on the door. Nor did they need to wait long for an answer. Almost immediately the door opened and Septimus Brasier, in hideous night shirt and cap, candle in hand, stood before them.

"Well!" he snarled sleepily. "What in the name of the demon's pit do you want!"

One look at him and they were satisfied, and hurried across the street. But over his shoulder Kramer yelled:

"Did you hear the bell?"

The old man giggled. He giggled and snickered at them, a grotesque, horrible figure, and finally he banged the door shut, and they heard him no more.

A light gleamed beneath the drawn shades of the other Brasier home. It looked so peaceful and home-like that it seemed hard to believe that stark, strange murder might be hiding behind its blinds. With grave misgivings, they stood on the piazza, as Lake pressed the electric button.

No answer. Kramer whispered that the old man lived all alone, though a negress came in during the day and cooked and cleaned. They rang again and finally tried the door. It was open.

Treading softly they went in, and quietly called the old scientist's name. But there was no reply to their halting cries, and room after room through which they passed was empty. At last they stood before the entrance to the room in which the old gentleman had entertained Dare not many hours before.

Hesitatingly Dare tried the handle. The door was not locked and he thrust it back. One glance into the room confirmed their worst suspicions.

A startled group of three white-faced men, they stood in the doorway, looking upon the work of the fiend who had awakened from the long sleep of the years, to toll the bell again and strike down another victim of the Brasier family.

On the floor before the black cabinet, the curtains of which were tightly drawn, the body of

Didymus Brasier lay, couched with a kind of majesty for all its pitiful, awkward pose. Though the arms were flung above his head, frozen in the last struggle for life into the uncouth sculpture of death, though the legs were sprawling and the old-fashioned swallow-tailed coat disarranged, yet there was dignity and nobility on the quiet forehead, a great calm on the bearded face—and a wistful question in the open eyes.

As they stood there, stricken dumb and still, appalled at that which they beheld, there came something to mar that majesty and add a final touch of deviltry.

Even as they watched, it appeared—a ragged, scarlet splotch across the forehead of the dead man!

The curse was completed. The final scar was affixed; the ghastly seal and symbol was delivered. It had come suddenly, inexplicably; one moment it had not been there, and then it appeared, like a red star on the brow of death. Who had put it there? And how?

The need for action had come. Something must be done. And suddenly Dare Allan realized, subconsciously but surely, that he must take the lead—that these two townsmen were too stunned to act. By an effort he found his voice.

"He might not be dead," said Dare. "Run—get a doctor—quick!"

Relieved that something had been suggested, Lake gave a last look at the body, and darted down the corridor toward the door. Dare approached the body, with Kramer following slowly. Dare knelt down and put his ear over the old man's heart. He listened intently; then raising his head, he lifted the pallid wrist and felt of the pulse.

"Didymus Brasier is beyond help, I am afraid," he said solemnly. "What a frightful thing has happened!"

He looked up astonished. So occupied had he been that he had not noticed that they were not alone.

Gathered in a frightened group at the door was a hushed crowd of villagers, old men and young, white-faced girls craning their necks to look over the shoulders of gray beards. The inevitable curiosity of human nature was written large upon their faces. And as Dare and Kramer stared at them there was a shifting and a muttering and a red-faced, black mustached man, flashing a glittering star, pushed his way into the room.

"I am Sheriff Hawkins," he said rudely. "Who done this?"

Dare did not answer, and Kramer pointed silently at the red splotch on the forehead of the man. The sheriff gave it a glance, and then wheeled belligerently.

"I've got information," he snarled. "Where's Dr. Lake?"

At that moment the dentist pushed his way through the crowd, accompanied by a thin, excited little man with a black bag. Dare guessed that he was the physician.

"You want me, sheriff?" asked Lake, as the doctor hurried to the body and knelt beside it.

"Yes, sir!" said the sheriff pompously. "I want you, David Lake. Come over here!"

His manner was brutal, insulting. David Lake walked up to him.

"I think," said the sheriff, glancing around at the crowd as if hoping none would miss a word of what he had to say, "that I am now about to clear up the Brasier murder mysteries. I have reliable information, Lake, that you're hard up. So hard up that your wife's taking in boarders!"

He paused to enjoy the flush that burned the face of David Lake.

"I also happen to know," went on the sheriff, swelling with importance, "that this dead man here has left you quite a sum of money—why, I don't pretend to guess at. I also happen to be aware that you came in this house, not half an hour ago, and were alone with Didymus Brasier. And I therefore arrest you——"

A scream came from the crowd, and a girl pushed her way forward. Her eyes blazing, she confronted the sheriff like a tigress.

"Don't you dare!" she cried. "My daddy never did it!"

"Is that so?" sneered Sheriff Hawkins, with an elaborate grin. "Well, what's *that* doing there?"

As if he knew exactly where to look, he walked over to the cabinet and threw back the velvet curtains.

A terrible sight confronted them. Huddled in a bunched-up heap at the bottom was a staring dead man—the body of Septimus Brasier!

CHAPTER FOUR

IN the "sitting-room" of the Lake home, an hour later, Dare Allan and Kramer sat facing each other at the fire-place. They were alone. Solicitous neighbor women were upstairs, ministering to the hysterical wife of Dr. Lake, and with them, calm-eyed and heart-broken Lorna Lake.

"There are a dozen mysteries connected with this thing," said Dare, breaking a long silence—"each one more baffling than the other. Who rang that bell? And why? How was Didymus Brasier killed? What caused that crimson spot on his forehead? How was his brother killed—and how did he get into that cabinet when we had seen him in his night clothes not five minutes before? How——"

"How?" snapped Kramer impatiently. "That is the riddle this town has been asking about the former Brasier murders—and leaving it unguessed all these years. It's not natural—there's some damnable occultism at work, I say—there's no other answer to the puzzle—no sensible way out. It drives one mad. It can't be solved!"

"Nonsense! It's got to be solved! You can't let Dr. Lake——"

He halted, for Kramer had hurled a withering glance, so poignant as to be untranslatable. The hunchback rose from his chair and left the room without a word.

His action struck Dare as peculiar. It occurred to him that perhaps Kramer might know more about the business than others suspected. Then he hurled the thought from his mind—for he had been watching Kramer all the time; the man had had no opportunity to commit a crime. It simply couldn't be.

Well! There was nothing more for Dare to do. His future course was plain—he could only return to New York in the morning and tell his firm. He started at the touch of a burning hand on his wrist.

Lorna Lake had stolen upon him and was looking into his eyes with such piteous entreaty as he had never before beheld.

"Mr. Allan!" Her voice was a stifled groan. "Won't you help me?"

She sank to her knees, her hands resting on the arm of his chair, the flickering light from the fire bathing her in crimson. Her hands were working in the convulsion of an approaching hysteria; her lovely face was drawn and haggard.

"Why, Miss Lake! You know that anything I can do——"

"Yes, I know. But I don't think you can possibly understand. I want a great deal of help, Mr. Allan—I want you to save my father's life. Sheriff Hawkins is his bitter enemy—some old political feud, or something—and unless something is done, he will make my father die for a crime he never committed. And he must not do that, Mr. Allan!"

"Quietly, Miss Lake," Dare soothed her. "If I can be of any assistance you know that you can count on me. I am at your service!"

Lorna swallowed back a sob, and looked at him piteously.

"You know something of mechanics, Mr. Allan—and I think you can help. You must realize there is some deadly secret behind these murders—else why does that bell ring the way it does? I want you to solve this crime. I want you to find the real murderer. And I want you to do it—to-night!"

So wrought up was the unhappy girl that the words came from her chokingly. She looked up at Dare as one might gaze at a deliverer. Dare winced. He did not feel equal to the baffling task she was seeking to thrust upon him.

"I will do what I can," he said soberly. "But I am afraid that will be but little! I will ask Mr. Kramer to help me!"

"No!" The word shot from the girl's lips like an arrow. "Don't tell him. I don't want him to help!"

"Why not?"

"Because——" She glanced around her fearfully. And at that moment the distorted figure of the mis-shapen man appeared in the doorway. He looked at Lorna and a scowl gathered above his eyes like a thunder cloud.

"Lorna! Go to your mother!" he ordered.

She stared back at him defiantly. Her eyes were blazing, and her white teeth bit into her shaking lip.

"Don't speak to me like that," she replied proudly. "Remember—I am not your wife—yet!"

She looked appealingly at Dare, then rose to her feet and stood, waiting for word from him.

"I promise!" said Dare Allan. She thanked him brokenly, and left the room. Kramer had remained looking on. Something like a grunt came from his throat, and he followed hurriedly, leaving Dare alone in the room.

To make a decision was, with Dare Allan, to act. Five minutes before he had been preparing to return to New York, and speculating on what measures were to be taken by the local authorities to solve the dual murder mystery. And now he had determined to solve the crime himself. A woman had wrought this change—the sadness in a woman's eyes, and the pain in her heart; the cry in her broken voice. Yes, and the distrust she had shown regarding Kramer. Lorna was to marry Kramer! Dare wondered why that thought gave him a pang. And Lorna distrusted Kramer. That was another mystery!

Now was Dare's opportunity. He had no desire to share Kramer's company now. At any moment he might return and make himself difficult to get rid of. Dare grabbed his hat and slipped out noiselessly. Far down the shaded street, fillagreed with moonbeams, he saw lights and heard the voices of the townspeople. They were gathered around the jail, where Dr. Lake was a prisoner, discussing the tragedies. Fate was helping him.

For Dare was anxious to act at once, quickly, and unobserved. Already he had found a starting point for the investigation which Lorna had thrust upon him, and which he with the chivalric heart that is the heritage of every true young American was determined to accomplish. The beginning place was already clear in his mind. He must get into the steeple, and examine for himself the spirit bell!

In two minutes he was at the base of the old church tower. Standing in the shadows of its wooden buttress, he examined its outline carefully, seeking to find the easiest and safest point of entrance. No easy task lay before him. The church door was barred and locked, and no light came from its narrow, stained-glass windows.

Surrounding the church was a plot of ground, fenced in with a high, spiked iron railing, except at the very entrance. Over this railing Dare leaped with all the skill left him, after college and two years in France. He landed on all fours, but picked himself up unhurt and hurried across the lawn, losing himself in a mass of black shadow thrown by the western wall of the church, and seeking some door left unlocked, or a window through which he might enter.

The thought that if he were discovered his actions might arouse the suspicion of the towns-

people was fully awake in his mind and so he moved with all caution. In ten minutes he had almost completed the circuit of the building and had given up hope of finding what he sought, when chance unexpectedly favored him. He saw a basement window bulging open.

It was the work of a moment to scramble through the window and let himself drop. The fall was less than four feet, and he found himself standing in a dark, mouldy cellar. But he was inside the church, and confidence surged through him again. Moving cautiously, he crossed the gloom, and soon he saw clearer. A flight of ghostly steps rose a few yards from him, and he made his way to them. Stepping softly he mounted.

At the top of the stairs there was a door, and it was standing wide open. Dare stepped through and found himself in a narrow corridor, across from which yawned another open door. Through this he stepped and found himself standing in a little room, smelling of books. He knew that he was in the pastor's study.

Again he found the door and it was open. And through this he went, into the open church, with the vacant pews gaping before him, the deserted pulpit, the empty choir and the bleak aisles thrown into ghostly relief by the rectangular shafts of moonlight peeping through the narrow, arched windows. It gave him a singular, fearful feeling, unlike anything he had ever experienced—the ghastly moonlight, and the silent, deserted old church, with the white memorial tablets ranged like tombstones along the walls.

Swiftly he hurried down the aisles, the soft patter of his feet awakening strange echoes. Dare knew that he might be watched—no glimmer of a solution had yet entered his brain, but he knew that the bell had rung, and he knew that might mean the presence in the church of a human being. Frequently he glanced behind him, but not once did he catch a glimpse of a moving thing.

Into the outer corridor hurried Dare and nearly stumbled over a flight of winding steps leading aloft to the belfry. This was the way up the steeple—the ladder to the bell. Without hesitation he began its ascent. Round and round it twisted, like a tendril, climbing ever higher and higher, reaching up the narrow torso of the steeple, getting darker, and narrower step by step. And step by step Dare climbed. Presently a brush of air fanned his cheek, stealing through the titled lattice of a narrow window. A bat dashed past his face and he heard the frightened squeal and scampering of a rat. But on and up he climbed, and presently he emerged to the end.

He was on a narrow platform, lighted by filtering moonlight through a tiny window, surrounding no railing, and directly in front of which hung an enormous iron bell. A rope from a ring at the top came across and was tied to a stake in the wall. Below him yawned a black abyss of emptiness. He was at the heart of the mystery.

But could he read it? Could he translate what was here to be read into the terms of a criminal indictment which would put the guilty man behind the bars? That was Dare's task, and now that he was here, he faltered. There seemed nothing for him to do.

Yet, he told himself, he must do something. He had given Lorna his word. And somehow the thought of Lorna gave him courage—and a glow of determination which made his heart like a forge. There must be something that he could do. He would find it, and do it.

First he examined the knotting of the rope around the stake. It told him nothing. It might have been tied five minutes before; Dare could not determine. Then he sank to his knees and studied the dust at his feet. But there were no footprints there. He rose, uncertain what next to do. And before he could think of anything else—fate intervened.

Bong!

With a shuddering clamor, the bell clanged again. The bell clanged there at his feet, and the floor beneath him quivered and the tower trembled.

Bong! Bong! Bong!

The bell was ringing—the clapper was swinging ponderously back and forth, and the mighty clamor of its brazen tongue filled the air with a roaring sound that pounded at his ears.

The clapper was swinging—the bell was ringing—but, miracle! The bell stood unmoved! Unrocked, it remained quiet as a baby's cradle. It was the clapper that was ringing, the clapper that was swinging—but the huge bell itself moved not. Sparks hissed around it!

Dismayed and unbelieving, Dare turned. No one was beside him; the rope was untouched; the knots still tied, the rope steady and taut.

Bong! Bong! Bong!

The sonorous notes, proclaiming their prophecy of fresh murder, spoke again. And Dare Allan, his eyes glittering, fell back against the shaking side of the steeple and laughed! It was shrill laughter, with, mayhap, a touch of hysteria in it, too, but triumphant laughter for all that.

For Dare Allan had solved the secret of the spirit bell.

CHAPTER FIVE

SILENCE settled over the dreary church tower like the black cloak of an enchanter. Dare Allan remained where he was, leaning against the curving, still studdering wall of the steeple, thankful that at least a little light had been given him. To his mechanical mind, the secret of the spirit bell was no longer a mystery. Its operation was plain—only its source was hidden. To follow that lead to its source would, he felt convinced, bring him to the haunt of the guilty.

These reflections had so dimmed his mind to other impressions that at first he did not hear

a sound that under other circumstances would immediately have reached his ears. It was the sound of feet clambering slowly up the winding steeple stairs. But finally he did start and listen.

There was no mistake! The scraping boot against the shaking steps was heard plainly; the creak of the boards he instantly identified. Someone was climbing those stairs! And it was clear that the approaching person did not know he was there, for he did not step cautiously, but planked his feet as if all the world might know that he was on the way.

Moving on tiptoe, Dare crept nearer to the railing and looked down. Dimly he could make out a slight, dark figure, but it was impossible to discern the features, or even the color of the hair. The moonlight struck once where a white, slender hand showed, but that was all.

Fear was not in his heart. But awe bound his soul in chains.

The ascent was nearly completed; the heaving breath of the climber came to Dare's ears with distinctness, and once a muttered oath. All at once the other was before him. A narrow shaft of moonlight fell full upon him—touching his tangled beard with liquid silver; giving a glisten to his wild eyes and flooding his face with a greenish tinge of terror. At sight of him, Dare Allen gave a groan of horror and sank back, speechless. The frightful thing before him paralyzed every nerve and muscle and fiber of his being.

For it was—or, by all the laws of nature, it should have been—a dead thing that trembled and gasped at the edge of that platform; a dead thing, wanted by the police—a corpse! But this abominable specter was alive—for it grunted and sweated and heaved whispered curses.

It was the apparition of Septimus Brasier!

The fierce, mouthing old man who had driven Dare Allan from his premises that afternoon; the shrinking old man who had crept across the street into his brother's house not long afterward; the giggling, mocking old man who, in night-cap and shirt, had waved a candle at them and jeered, when they sought a tragedy; the huddled body they had found in the cabinet of his brother's study—the same body that Dare had seen removed to the jail house by the police—this, of all things abroad on a night of terror now raised its grisly head and blinked at him at the top of the haunted tower.

Yet Dare's astonishment was echoed in the face of the old man. Amazement wrinkled his withered brow, and set his lips a-quiver. Startled fright crouched in the deep and bony sockets of his eyes. He sucked his breath viciously. Then, he seemed to gather himself together; the devil of a surpassing strength of a madman flickered, then blazed in his eyes, and with an unearthly shriek he leaped forward. Upon Dare he hurled himself with the fury of a demon.

Dare had only begun to regain his dazed senses when the attack came. Barely had he a moment to brace himself against the onslaught. Almost before he knew it the old man's body had pounced upon him; the old man's thin legs were twining around his stomach; the old man's breath was hot and wet upon his face, the old man's hands were clawing at his throat.

Undreamed-of strength was in that old man's body—the hard, iron, terrible strength of madness. Those legs of his were like steel, and their clasp at Dare's middle were like a vise—the pain they caused excruciating. Blindly, Dare struggled; desperately he tried to strike out, but his strength seemed leaving him, crushed by the grip of this damnable old man.

But his arms had been left free and with these he was battling. And as they swayed back and forth across that crazy platform, Dare's mind began to clear. He knew now that he was fighting for his life; that the bell, indeed, had just now tolled for him, that its curse was in those hands reaching for his neck, and that all his power must respond if he were to escape the fate that yawned for him.

Raising his hands, he caught at the thin wrists of his assailant and tried to break the onslaught. But they were like iron in his hands, and the fingers, clutching for his throat, seemed possessed of inhuman strength. Dare summoned all his strength and gave a great push forward.

Down to the floor they fell, with the old man beneath, but squirming with the agility of a monkey, he managed to send Dare rolling to the left, and a moment later he had pounced on top. They were less than two feet from the edge of the platform; beyond that point loomed black space.

Spitting like a raging cat, the old man grabbed again for Dare's throat, who again eluded him, and sought to regain his feet. But the old man beat him back, his arms and hands beating a rain of blows upon him, his feet kicking, his eyes blazing like burning balls of tallow. Again they clinched.

Convulsively, Dare tried to throw the old man back toward the banisters, but Brasier came back with a fierce lunging trick of wrestling that sent him rolling toward the abyss. By a miracle he caught himself at the very edge and an almost automatic blow from his right fist sent the old man spinning backward before he could hurl him over the edge, as his eyes proclaimed his purpose to have been.

That moment of danger, followed by a moment's respite, as the old man caught at the wall for support, was the one advantage Dare had managed to gain. He did not intend to lose it. Leaping to his feet, he assumed the aggressive, and jumped at his antagonist. It was his plan to overpower him and force him back down the stairs, for every moment that they struggled on this dizzy little platform meant danger to their lives. And Dare had seen stark murder written on the face of this old man.

For all his years, the old man was amazingly supple, and possessed of a cunning that was nothing short of marvelous. To one side he darted and Dare landed against the wall; the

next moment he had seized Dare by the middle and turned him over and was slowly, deliberately, forcing him back again toward the abyss.

With all his might Dare struggled. Against that dreadful force he marshalled the last ounce of strength he possessed. But his youth was no match against the demoniac force of this aged man. Filled with a fury that passed understanding, Brasier bent his withered shoulders against the young man and inch by inch the young man gave way. Inch by inch he was forced to yield and inch by inch he neared that gaping black cavern that seemed hungry for him. Inch by inch he retreated; his body, caught off his guard, twisted into an unnatural position where he could not regain his hold; inch by inch he was slowly being pushed toward death. The long, hard struggle was nearing its end.

The boards rattled and groaned and creaked as their bodies heaved and swayed. Startled night birds stirred in the dark places far above their heads. Old dust, stirred by the struggle, rose in clouds, and filled their nostrils. And suddenly the moon, which had given them light, dropped behind a mass of cloud, and they were in total blackness.

Another inch! There could not be many more, thought Dare dispairingly. And yet another—he was yielding quicker now for his strength was failing rapidly. The grip of this wrestler's trap in which the old man had caught him was killing him. Another inch——

"Curse you!" snarled the old man. "Curse you! You deserve this! Tonight's business is on your head! I'll——"

"Father!"

Another voice! A low, startled, pleading voice sounding on the choking air of that awful hour. A voice, entreating and yet filled with gentle command.

"Father!"

Sterner now, the word was repeated, as one will rebuke a much loved child. And to Dare's utter amazement, the grip of those horrid arms relaxed; the knee was taken from his side, the infernal beard was drawn away from his neck. He stood up, free.

He heard the old man moving away from him. He heard another step where the stairs opened on the platform. He heard the old man's voice, sobbing like a child. And he heard another voice, soothing tenderly.

"Who—is—there?" gasped Dare.

There was a long pause. And then the voice came again—hoarse, vibrant with hatred.

"Is it—*him*—father?"

A growl came from the old man. It was enough.

"I'm sorry I interfered! I thought it was the police! Dare Allan, I'm going to kill you!"

The man was fumbling in his pockets. Something glittered in his hand, and then a solid shaft of light illuminated the narrow interior. He had drawn a flashlight.

But the rays of his pocket lamp revealed a strange story—an empty platform and a yawning abyss.

Dare Allan had disappeared.

CHAPTER SIX

IT was an hour after midnight, and the excited townsfolk of Buckeystown had finally consented to go to bed. The double murder mystery would keep many of them awake far into the morning hours discussing it, but in Buckeystown it is a religion to be in bed before 1 A. M. Light after light winked out behind the curtained windows until all the town was dark and quiet, save for one remaining light. That light was in the jail, and behind its bars was Dr. Lake, accused of murder.

Out of the shadows that brooded around the deserted shack of Septimus Brasier a figure slodged itself, and, after looking swiftly to right and left, up and down, behind him and before, darted swiftly across the street. Swiftly and silently the figure darted up the steps of the house of Didymus Brasier, and slipped through the unlocked door.

An hour it remained there. Then it came out, and moved off hurriedly down the street, until it reached the door of the jail. There the light from the window fell full on the face of the figure. It was Dare Allan.

Briskly he rapped on the door and presently it was thrown back by Sheriff Hawkins, who with insolent authority demanded to know who he was and what in hell he was looking for.

"I have just discovered how the two Brasier brothers were murdered," replied Dare quietly.

"What? Haw! Haw! Have you just found that out?"

"I have also learned how the bell was rung—why it was rung—who rang it—and who the guilty man is," persisted Dare. "I want you to accompany me!"

"Say, young feller, you're crazy," sneered Hawkins. "Get out of here before I lock you up for disturbing the peace of the sheriff!"

"Are you going to make it necessary for me to telephone the district attorney?" snapped Dare. Sheriff Hawkins opened his eyes wider at that. By the grace of the political influence of the district attorney, Sheriff Hawkins held his job. He didn't want to get into trouble with the district attorney.

"What are you talking about?" he demanded.

"I've told you," snapped Dare. "I want you to meet me in the study of Mr. Didymus Brasier in fifteen minutes, and I promise to clear up the entire mystery of this crime. If you're not there, I'll know what to do."

Without wasting any more time on Sheriff Hawkins Allan turned swiftly and ran down Main street in the direction of the Lake residence. From outside, the house was dark and deserted, but when he got inside, he found that

Lorna Lake was sitting alone by the fireside. She sprang up quickly at sight of him, and came hurriedly toward him. Tears had stained her pale cheeks, and her eyes were burdened with suffering.

"I'm so glad you came," she cried. "Have you done anything—you've been gone so long?"

"Lots," he told her, taking her hand which she had freely extended to him. "But I can't tell you all now. I want you to answer me some questions."

"Willingly."

"Are you engaged to marry Kramer?"

The question startled and hurt her, but she met it bravely.

"Once I believed I loved him," she said gently, "and at my father's request I promised to marry him. Since then—I don't know why—I have grown to loathe and despise him. Yet he seems just the same as ever—except more moody, and more—sensitive—about his injury."

"Thanks. That was all I wanted to know. I wish you would get your wraps now and come with me."

Unquestioningly, as if she trusted implicitly in his leadership, she did as he bade her. He assisted her with her cloak, and the delicious nearness of her stirred his feelings more than he would have believed possible. As he bent far forward a strand of hair brushed his cheek. It gave release to something that was in his heart.

"You don't love Kramer now,"—with a telltale eagerness in his voice that he tried to fight back.

She turned and looked him steadily in the eyes. And as those two souls confronted one another in that hour of mystery and pain, an understanding passed between them. The girl reasoned.

"No!" she said distinctly, and they passed out into the night.

The library of Didymus Brasier was occupied by Sheriff Hawkins when they arrived. He was sitting on the extreme edge of a chair, his big red hands on his knees, looking exceedingly uncomfortable.

"Well?" he asked brusquely, as they came in, and then rising, offered the chair to Lorna. "What are we going to do here?"

"I'll show you without delay," replied Dare, after seeing that Lorna was comfortable. "Now, Sheriff Hawkins, you will have to understand a few things before we can proceed. One of them is that science holds many strange and remarkable secrets which are not yet for sale in the stores. And it is by these strange secrets that I have been able to get at the truth of these crimes."

Sheriff Hawkins made no reply to this, and Dare stalked over to the cabinet, the curtains of which he drew asunder.

"This is the most remarkable instrument in the history of the world," continued Dare. "Today I had the privilege of seeing a part of its wonders. Tonight, in order to save an innocent man from the chair, I intend to show you all its works. It was invented by Didymus Brasier, who was slain in this room tonight. It was his life work. Before I turn the five switches which will set in operation its five functions, I want to tell you that it is a combination of the moving picture, phonograph, and three other instruments which can record taste, smelling and hearing. By the combination of those five elements, amazing results can be obtained, as you shall see. But mark you also! The motion pictures which you shall look upon are not the motion pictures that you see in the playhouses. They are a vastly improved design, containing perspective, which is not obtainable under present patents—and color. Don't be afraid, sheriff—it will not be a ghost that you see, but an illusion."

As he spoke, Dare came over to Lorna's side, and took her hand. He whispered a few comforting words into her ear, and she smiled back at him trustfully. Then he raised his hand, reached across and touched five buttons. An instant whirring sound was heard, which almost as instantly ceased. Again Dare pressed another button and the room was thrown into absolute darkness.

All was very quiet for a moment. Not a sound came except the puffing sound of Hawkins' breathing, for he did not like being in this room of death in the dark. Dare squeezed Lorna's hand, and her answering pressure told him that she was not afraid.

A white light suddenly appeared in the cabinet—a vaporous, phosphorecent light which gradually grew brighter and more distinct, until the blackness of the cabinet had changed to a pool of glowing radiance. And then occurred the first miracle.

The figure of Didymus Brasier appeared in the light. He was standing erect, with his white beard flowing down across his starched shirt bosom, his eyes were open and twinkling and he looked alive. He gazed at them searchingly. He opened his mouth—and he spoke!

"I am here," he said, his voice, velvet and clear, without the faintest whir or slough of a phonograph record, "to tell the mystery of the Brasier murders. Listen well. There were three Brasier brothers—not two! Septimus, whom you—a vaporous, phosphorescent light which gradu-whom none of you knew. Shadrach, when a young man, left the town in disgrace and for years none of us heard from him.

"Kramer, who you also knew, was our nephew, and we loved him well. He was the son of our brother Shadrach. But Shadrach had left town in disgrace, accused of robbery; his mother married again, and the boy grew up under the name of his step-father. He was twelve years old, when one day my cousin, Hobart Brasier, while out with his family, ran down Kramer in his carriage and crippled him for life. It made him the hunchback that he is today.

"The following year Shadrach reappeared at my doorstep. He was a madman. A career of

carouse had driven him finally to insanity. In shuddering horror my brother Septimus and I took him in. And that night Septimus and I had our quarrel which had lasted all these years. I was for sending Shadrach to a sanitarium for treatment. Septimus insisted on taking him to his home and hiding him, because he feared the police. And hide him he did for all these years in this little town, and to do it he had to become a recluse himself and sink farther and farther down life's scale."

The apparition paused and seemed to hesitate as if it were difficult for it to go on.

"Then, one day," it continued, "Shadrach saw his son, known as Kramer. He saw him from a peekhole in the window. He became violently excited, and eventually Septimus had to bring the boy to him. The boy had a close mouth in his head all right, and he has seen his father regularly all these years, and no one has been the wiser for it. But the father was shocked at the deformity of his boy. If possible, it made him more insane. He plotted his revenge.

"It was he who killed Hobart Brasier. It was he who killed Hobart Brasier's wife. It was he who killed his sister-in-law, Mary Raleigh. It was he who rang the bell. All those people were in the carriage when Kramer, as we know him, was crippled. They paid with their lives for the accident. Shadrach watched his brother Septimus experimenting with chemicals. He himself had studied the subject. He prepared a preparation of *curare* in a new form, and instructed the boy Kramer how to get it into the food of his relatives. The boy did not know he was obeying the instructions of a madman murderer. He merely obeyed orders. That was how they died.

"And now you ask me about the bell. It was, at first, an accident. All my days I have been an inventor of strange devices. I had evolved the principle of the wireless, I believe, before Marconi had even conceived the idea. I had secretly made a test with the church bell, and I found that I could make its clapper swing with my wireless device. On the night that Hobart Brasier was murdered, many years ago, I made my first test. I had rigged up the apparatus in the rear of my house. And Shadrach, spying from his window, saw me work it, and heard the bell. On the following nights he rang the bell.

"You ask me why I concealed the crime? My brother was a madman. I did not want to see him hanged. But I must hurry. The record on which my voice is being recorded is not long, and I must tell all. I have discovered through my friend Dr. Lake that Kramer has been engaged in a bad business. He has been dabbling with illegitimate stocks; he has squandered all of Dr. Lake's money, and by craft has induced Dr. Lake to sign certain papers which in the eyes of the law make him a criminal. I am determined this shall not go on. I have made plain to Kramer what I intend to do. I believe he has told his father. Last night I tasted my food and noted a strange flavor. If I have taken the fatal *curare*, then the bell will ring and the inevitable splotch will be on my forehead within forty-eight hours. That is why I am making this record. It will hold in law—there can be no argument, for you see me speaking, and you hear my voice. Should I die, as I firmly believe I will, there will be one here for whom I have sent, from New York, who will know how to operate this machine. The murder will be recorded—for this I know to be true, as death approached, in the other murders, Shadrach Brasier always appeared at the scene to triumph over his victim. If he enters this room my machine will disclose him to your eyes. Good-by. I know that Kramer is a clever man. I fear he will entrap in this business an innocent man. Hence this record."

The figure vanished.

The white light came and danced fitfully before them, and the whirring sound was renewed. Then another figure appeared. It was Septimus Brasier, tattered and in rags. He was bending forward eagerly.

"Didymus," he cried in an awful voice, addressing the unseen form of his brother, "we have been poisoned—both of us—by Shadrach. You, because he fears you will expose the rottenness of his son, I, because I swore I would become reconciled to you before you died. We will die together. I already feel——"

Again the figure vanished.

But this time the white light remained unoccupied for only a brief moment. A wild, dishevelled form appeared—the figure which Dare Allan had twice mistaken for Septimus, once in the upper window of the house across the street and again in the steeple—the form of Shadrach, the murderer.

His eyes were glittering balefully and he bent over as if he watched the agonies of the dying.

"Die, curse the both of you," he howled. "Die, curse you—and die knowing that another, not I or my son, will pay for this. You have brought some scientist from New York to spy on us, eh? Well, let him beware, or— Now! Now! Now! Now you are dying! Now I'll ring the bell!"

With an oath, the old man leaped up and vanished.

Again the strange silence of the room, and then the voice of the old man again. Didymus Brasier was speaking. His voice was very weak.

"I and my brother are dying here! But we have cleared an innocent man, for we have known from the ravings of Shadrach for weeks that he was planning this thing and that the guilt was to be put upon Lake, an innocent man. The record, if this machine has worked, should be complete. Every word that he has uttered has been photographed, every action photographed, and now—remain where you are, and if all goes well, you can touch him in the dark—you can feel his hand; note the thumb, cut off at the center, note the curve characteristic of his long nose, and the identification will be complete. And if this puzzling drug evades

the autopsy as it has done before—this blend of *curare*, then smack your lips and you can taste it, for this machine records the sense of taste; inhale and your nostrils will discover its presence. It is enough. We are dying—by the hand of our own brother. Oh—h—"

A long, low groan came on the stillness, and then Dare Allen flashed on the lights.

The cabinet, staring back at them, was empty, and the whirring of the wheels had ceased. Then suddenly a strange sound came to their ears.

It was the Bong! Bong! Bong! of the spirit bell.

CHAPTER SEVEN

"I LEFT them in there," said Dare Allan, pointing at the steeple.

Beside him stood Sheriff Hawkins, Dr. Lake, a few jail attendants—and Lorna. Lorna had refused to be taken home. She had insisted on remaining at Dare's side.

Whatever might be urged against Sheriff Hawkins—and it has been said, in the village, that he and Kramer had worked together on more than one crooked deal—he was not afraid. He knew that a ferocious lunatic and a dangerous, desperate man were in that church. He had heard the bell give its three strokes of death warning not five minutes before. Yet, opening the front door with a skeleton key, he led the way up that shaking spiral, unafraid.

Behind him came Dare, followed by the others. Lorna remained at the foot of the stairs with her father.

Half-way up the ladder, the party were halted by another shock. The bell was ringing again, three deep, ponderous tones.

"Do you think they can escape?" asked Hawkins, turning to Dare. "How did you manage to get away from them?"

"I swung overhand on the rope tied to the bell," Dare whispered back, "and then found a ladder that runs straight up the steeple. It must have been used by the builders. It was very easy and simple."

"But very dangerous—that overhand swing," returned Hawkins admiringly, and they continued their upward climb.

Not a sound came from over their heads now. All was as quiet as the grave. They began to wonder if they had been heard, yet they were proceeding upward with the utmost caution. Dare remembered how suddenly Shadrach Brasier—whom he had thought Septimus—had come upon him. He doubted if they were heard. But he was presently to be disillusioned.

"We know you are coming," cried a terrible voice.

It was Kramer speaking. He stood at the head of the steps, his flashlight in his hand, playing it full in the face of Hawkins. Over his shoulder peered the head of Shadrach Brasier.

"That fellow from New York locked the window and thought he had us penned in," continued Kramer in a loud voice. "He need not have troubled. We know now that the end is here. But you will never take us. Ring the bell, father!"

"Bong! Bong! Bong!"

"Ring it hard, father. Get all the village out of bed. Let them be in at the finish. And advance one step—any of you—and I'll blow your hearts out!"

In his other hand he held a revolver. He leveled it straight down at Hawkins, and if the sheriff had moved, it would have meant instant death.

Voices were heard excitedly outside the church. The townsfolk were clambering from their beds and hurrying to the steeple.

"Right, father! Ready! Let's start—for hell!"

With a weird shriek the old man darted forward. Kramer was close behind him. There was a scurry of feet across the floor, and then sudden, sickening silence. In horror they waited. There was a sickening crash.

Two bodies at the base of the tower! And the spirit bell silenced forever after!

Lorna Lake is Lorna Allan now, of course. She lives in New York City, and there are two little Allans—a little Lorna and a little Dare. Doctor Lake is a mighty proud grandfather, and as for Mrs. Lake—well, she spoils the children right and left.

One word more.

The strange machine which Didymus Brasier left behind him has been turned, at the suggestion left in his will, over to the United States Government, specifically the Department of Justice. Perhaps the reader has surmised the application it has to crime detection, though the author has scrupulously refrained from referring to it.

At any rate, the Department of Justice is tremendously interested in its novel possibilities.

AMERICAN COIN IN CLOTHES

A Pole named Pictr Tala, travelling from America to Danzig, was taken ill recently in the Young Men's Christian Association hut, Waterloo road, London, and removed to an infirmary. He had only two shillings and threepence in English money, but hidden in his clothing he had twenty-two $10 gold pieces and paper money to the value of $990.

His shoes were found to be very heavy and when they were photographed by the X-ray twelve large coins, $10 gold pieces, were found between the leather and the sole of each boot.

An Astral Agreement

By EDMUND K. GOLDSBOROUGH

MY early life was spent in the mountains of India, where, amid surroundings both peaceful and calm, my spiritual growth was in no way restricted. It was the will of fate that led me to the Far East, where materialism is master, and the deeper truths of being are submerged in subtle seas of commercialism and greed.

The weird and incredible tale that I am about to unfold I am loath to relate. I have been exhorted to do so, however, by a member of the ancient religious brotherhood of the Rosicrucians, as a warning and perhaps protection to those who are investigating the occult.

Before beginning my story I wish, at the risk of boring my reader, to set forth a few facts which, while rejected by the worldly-minded, are nevertheless self-evident to the mystics throughout the world. The first that I desire to particularly emphasize is that the physical body is but a cage in which the spirit, or consciousness, remains captive until death intervenes, or the mind of the individual is so strengthened through a process of spiritual growth that the bars are temporarily sundered, and freedom is, for a time, gained.

If you are ever in Arabia ask any Mohammedan what happens when death overtakes man, and he will tell you that the spirit, or ego, passes to the astral plane, where it finds abundant peace, prior to its passage back to earth. Countless lives are necessary on this and other spheres, before the spirit is prepared for its ultimate resting place in the infinite sea of Truth, whose placid waters eternally invigorate the wearied wanderer. The spirit does not immediately journey to the astral plane at the instant of death, however, but lingers near earthly scenes for a time. The ego remains conscious; but is unseeen by the majority of men, as their mentalities are so stifled with the miasma of sense that they are unable to pierce the veil. When the astral plane is finally reached it is a gigantic task to communicate with the earth plane, as currents upon currents of ether divide these conditions. Communication is possible; but only when one is so spiritually evolved that he is able to force his thoughts through the imponderable ether. Generally the messages purported to emanate from the departed are from those who have but recently passed over, and whose spirits are still hovering about the earth, in which case messages are easily imparted to those minds which have been rendered receptive.

I left India when I was eighteen and journeyed to Vienna in company with my parents, who engaged in business in that city. The intense materialism of the Teuton race all but stifled us, and, indeed, my good father shortly succumbed to the sordid thought waves which completely poisoned his pure and sensitive nature. We did not grieve at his departure, as prior to his entrance to the astral plane he sent us a dispatch stating that all was well and the future bright. Through much prayer and meditation my mother and myself were able to protect our minds against combative influences; but the task was a mighty one. When I suggested that we journey to America she willingly agreed.

While we found the States charged with the materialism which so characterizes the west, nevertheless there was a sweetness in the air which did much toward neutralizing the evil. This sweetness was the breath of liberty. The desire for freedom had been born.

One night I attended a Bahai meeting, where I derived an infinite amount of comfort. I found the disciples of Abdul Baha sweet and kindly disposed. As I was leaving the hall I found myself shaking hands with a gentle Persian girl. As soon as I gazed into her face I realized that she was my lost soul-mate, and our hearts melted into one. I called her Stella, knowing that she had brightened my pathway in former lives. Soon we were married, and our lives were as happy as lives on the earth plane could be. Nor was our peace marred when my mother passsed away, as we realized that she was but heeding the call to go higher.

Stella, though spiritually minded, had nevertheless not learned to project the astral body, and I left her growth in the hands of the Father, not desiring to force her unfoldment. Undeveloped thoughts, like buds, should not be tampered with. From earliest boyhood I had discovered the occult secret of forsaking the physical structure. Frequently in the dead of night I wandered at will through the infinite mental mazes that environ us. Sometimes, perchance on a hot summer's evening, I would leave my body to journey to a far-off mountain peak, where the air was so pure it seemed that it was the breath of God.

I had been taught from infancy never to dislike any one; but found it a difficult task to feel kindly toward an avaricious business associate, whose personality seemed so charged with the things of earth that I actually shuddered at his approach. Stella detested him on account of an undue familiarity. One bitter evening in November this man—we will call him Smith—slipped upon the ice while mounting some steps, fell heavily and was carried unconscious to his home. Three days later he died and I had no regrets, as I felt that the forces of good had

drawn him from this world, as he actually seemed fitted for even a lower sphere than this. The day of his funeral I retired somewhat later than was my custom, and feeling the need of spiritual diversion I forsook my body and journeyed to loftier realms.

On the occasion in question I traveled far into unseen spheres, and when finally I drifted back to my material abode I was horrified to perceive that my body was out of bed, dressed and parading about the room! Instantly it dawned upon me that some vicious spirit had taken possession of it, and I was at a loss to know what to do. Stella had arisen earlier than usual that morning, and was sitting in the shop below making out some memoranda. Feverishly I seized her hand and swiftly guiding it wrote: "Stella, it is I, your husband. Some spirit of evil has taken possession of my body. We must devise some plan to make it depart. Until then, beware!" I was none too soon. At that instant the person, who had taken possession of my physical frame, entered the room. Seizing Stella he kissed her again and again. Whiter than death she said: "You are not my husband! How dare you profane his earthly temple?"

"I know I'm not," he leered. "I died a few days ago. Don't you remember Smith, who sought to awaken your love? Well, here I am back on earth to claim you as my own. When I awoke from the sleep of death I found myself without a body; while hovering around former scenes I perceived your husband's empty and so took possession of it. Now what are you going to do about it?"

"You beast!" said poor Stella, and she rushed from the room in a paroxysm of grief and bewilderment. What was she to do?

It did not take me long to decide! That afternoon when Smith left the house for a stroll I seized Stella by the hand and led her to her desk, penning these words:

"We must reach some agreement. I am in favor of asphyxiating Smith at the earliest possible moment. It is the only way! He has no right to be on the earth plane, and I am entirely justified in taking this step—even though it seems horrible. The gas will force him out of my body. I will then take possesson of it, and with my occult knowledge can neutralize the poison."

Stella did my bidding, an hour after Smith had retired. At four in the morning he was compelled to quit my body, and immediately I returned. The poison was very great, and I realized I had some work to do before my body could be resuscitated.

At daybreak Stella entered the room. Turning off the gas, she flung open the windows wide and a cold northwest wind began to devour the poison. As she turned to leave she found herself face to face with a shrewish servant, who for some inexplicable reason why always disliked her.

"You've gassed him!" she shrieked viciously —"don't deny it; your bed ain't been occupied. How does it happen you slept in the parlor? It was all planned, too," she continued, with a snarl like a she-wolf. "I heard you call him beast yesterday, and I found this when I was cleanin' this morning." Triumphantly she exhibited a bit of paper upon which had been written: "I am justified in taking this step—even though it seems horrible."

My faithful wife stood transfixed with terror.

"You don't understand," she said weakly.

"Don't I?" sneered the wretched domestic. "Perhaps not; but maybe the cops will, and I'm going to phone the station house this very minute."

Stella fainted. When she regained her senses she was surrounded by several police officers. A physician was hovering over me and he smiled pompously when my pulse began to flutter feebly. "I have snatched him from the jaws of death," he said. Little did this stupid man realize that my knowledge of the occult—and that alone—had brought about the seeming miracle.

My little Persian wife was all but frightened out of her wits by the brutality of the police sergeant.

"What made you do it, woman," he blustered.

"I did it at his bidding," she wept. "A friend had taken possession of his body."

'Mad as a March hare," said the sergeant. 'Send her over to the asylum for mental observation. She is hopeless."

An ambulance was heard clanging in the street below. Poor Stella was dragged away shrieking with fear and horror.

When I regained my senses and was given a strong stimulant I hurried to the hospital. I assured the superintendent that it was all a mistake, and that my wife was sane. I did not dare to tell him the truth for fear of being incarcerated myself.

"The law will decide as to her sanity," the superintendent then said. "In any case, she will be compelled to remain here a month."

By the utilization of certain mental currents I was soon able to soothe Stella. I exhorted her to control her feelings during her imprisonment; otherwise she might be committed for life to the State asylum.

Thanks be to Allah, my faithful soul-mate obtained her freedom four weeks later.

"Temporary aberration—caused by overwork," was the verdict of the alienist in charge.

A few weeks later I sold my shop and engaged passage for India. We will spend the balance of our days in the beautiful Himalaya mountains communing with God. In conclusion I would warn people from attempting to leave their bodies. The process may seem natural, but certain horrible complications may ensue, as in my own case. Personally, I will never project my astral spirit again.

Two Silver Links

By HARRY MORTON

"IT is the only room we have. The opposite part of the house is full, and this side is undergoing repairs."

"All right. If I have no neighbors, there will be no tramping in the 'wee small hours,' no ghostly snoring to disturb my slumbers."

"But you have a neighbor, sir. Mr. Gilbert Langley occupies the suite of rooms which your chamber adjoins. As for his snoring, sir, I can't answer for that."

Phil Kelly, the detective, took the key of the chamber he had just engaged for the night, handed a "tip" to the little colored hall boy who had shown him to his quarters, closed and locked his door, and proceeded to enjoy a cigar before retiring.

It was an ordinary single room in an ordinary hotel on the extreme west side of the city.

The time was already past midnight.

Phil had spent the day and evening on the track of a wily rascal whom he had traced to the vicinity, only to be baffled in the trail at last.

The headquarters man had determined to take a few hours' rest in the locality where the crook had eluded him, and to renew the pursuit at an early hour of the morning.

The man was wanted for a daring burglary, the details of which need not be stated, as it is in nowise connected with this case.

He was a cunning, subtle fellow, known as Kerry Kroh.

The man was an adept in the matter of disguises, and the police had a number of descriptions of him, no one of which tallied with any other.

When Kelly started upon the trail, he had arrived at the conclusion that Kerry Kroh had a snug retreat somewhere, where he was living in apparent respectability, and where he was very likely regarded as an honest man of business.

The only thing Phil had which could thus far be considered as a possible clue—as a means of eventually establishing his identity—was a curious link of silver.

It seemed originally to have been a silver half-dime which had been hammered into an oblong link carved with neatly executed spiral lines.

At one end the link had been wrenched apart, as if it had been torn by violence from a chain of similar make.

The detective had finished his cigar, and was examining the odd little link, when he became aware of an unusual sound which issued from the occupied suite of apartments adjoining his room.

As he listened the sound changed to a noise which seemed to be that of a terrific struggle, although singularly enough there was no outcry and no angry voices—nothing but a strange murmur which seemed like that of suppressed and fiercely labored breathing.

From the clerk Phil had understood that Mr. Gilbert Langley—his neighbor of the adjoining suite—was a bachelor of wealth and luxurious habits.

It was quite likely that he would keep articles of more or less value in his apartments.

Without a second's hesitation, the detective cautiously opened his door and stepped into the corridor.

Just beyond a door was sufficiently ajar to show a narrow crevice of light.

It was from thence those frightful sounds issued—the heavy breathing like the hushed snarl of wild beasts in deadly combat, and the strange noise as if some resisting body were being dragged fiercely across the thickly carpeted floor.

As Kelly moved down the corridor the significant noises increased, and his keen ears caught the mutter of furious tones.

"You threaten me, do you? Well, we'll see about that," some one growled in those restrained tones of fury.

"You had better just let that bell alone; 'twill be worse for you if you don't," was the answering snarl, in menacing and yet terrified accents.

Phil pushed the door open, and presented himself boldly upon the scene.

In the center of the room stood Gilbert Langley, glaring like a madman upon a burly fellow he held in the powerful grip of one hand, while with the other he was struggling to touch the electric button of the bell.

"Is there anything serious the trouble here, gentlemen?" asked Phil quietly.

Had a thunderbolt transfixed the two men they could not have seemed more stupefied than they did at his words and Kelly's abrupt appearance.

Every particle of color forsook Langley's wild countenance, and he, as if unconsciously, loosened his grip upon his antagonist.

The latter individual stared blankly for an instant, then he whirled suddenly, plunged past Phil, and disappeared across the corridor in one of the rooms which was undergoing repairs.

At that move, Langley dropped into the nearest chair; he breathed heavily like a man in mortal pain; great drops of sweat rolled from his pallid forehead.

"You appeared in the nick of time. I think the fellow would have got the best of me," he said.

"Did he attempt robbery?" inquired the officer.

"He is an escaped lunatic, I should think. This portion of the building ought to be doubly guarded; the scaffolds of the workmen afford an easy mode of ascent to this story! I might have been murdered; I will leave the hotel to-morrow."

The detective made no reply.

His attention was caught at the instant by something gleaming on the carpet at his feet.

With an apparently indifferent movement, he stooped and picked up the gleaming object.

It was a link of silver precisely like the one already in his possession.

Kerry Kroh—the mysterious man he was trailing—had without a doubt, been actually within the reach of his hands and had again eluded the man hunter.

"We had best send some one to overtake your midnight visitor," Phil said to Langley, as he touched the bellbutton and hurried from the room.

He entered the chamber into which the flying rascal had plunged.

An open window and a workman's scaffold below were evidences of the way which he had gone.

But half a block away, beneath the light of a street lamp, Phil caught the fleeting glimpse of a burly figure disappearing at a rapid pace.

A moment later he had descended to the pavement, and had started in swift pursuit.

He was still in sight, and for a couple of blocks Phil gained upon him rapidly.

Near the end of the next block he turned and darted into an alley.

In a few seconds more Kelly had traversed the alley and emerged into a thread of narrow street—a mere court flanked by tall tenements.

Not a solitary creature was in sight.

He retraced his steps back toward the hotel.

As he approached the main entrance he detected a man's figure half concealed by a tree a short distance up the flagging.

As he neared him slowly, Kelly started.

Could he believe the evidence of his own senses? Had he been pursuing the wrong man?

Or, had the fellow managed to foil his vigilance, and slip back unnoticed through the alley between the tenements?

And had he ventured back to finish with Gilbert Langley the singular combat which Phil had interrupted?

As the detective stood narrowly eying the individual crouching in the shadow of the tree, the burly and roughly-clothed figure, the ragged, sandy beard showing below the soft hat pulled down over his features, the man suddenly shot a fearful glance around, and so saw Phil.

With an expression of abject terror, which was almost ludicrous, he wheeled and dashed away.

"I don't think you will escape me this time," was Kelly's thought as he again began the chase.

He headed straight for the river, but after traversing a block or two he suddenly turned down-town.

As Phil gained upon him, he again whirled toward the river, and then almost immediately turned northward.

He ran like a race-horse and doubled like a fox, and it never occurred to Kelly that his frantic maneuvering might be assumed for the purpose of throwing him of his guard.

Phil had just determined to whistle for the aid of a patrolman, when the fellow dodged around a corner and proceeded directly eastward.

In the singular race he had led Phil in a circle; and they were now within a block of the starting point of the pursuit.

As he dodged about the corner Phil was almost at his heels.

"You might as well stop. I shall fire if you don't," he called.

At the call he bounded into an open hallway, and Phil heard his footsteps clattering up the bare steps of a narrow staircase.

In Kelly's glance at the building he noticed that the lower floor was a junk-shop, and that the upper floors were apparently tenements.

Kelly supposed his object was to escape him by means of the roof, and he promptly followed him up the stairs.

Day was already breaking and there was just light enough for Kelly to see him as he made a rush along the second landing toward the third flight of steps.

The third flight was entirely dark; it seemed shorter and narrower than those below; but Phil had no thought of trickery as he hastily ascended with one hand upon his revolver and the other upon what he supposed to be the rail of the stair case.

On the topmost step Kelly heard a match scraping the wall on the landing below.

In the instant light, dim though it was the detective saw the burly-looking individual whom he had been pursuing, and who was gazing upward with the most diabolical grin Kelly had ever beheld upon a human countenance.

The officer also saw that the stair-case rail was without balusters and was detached from the steps, which were simply a ladder movable at will.

He had barely time to note the fact and to note also that the man whom he had pursued was not the man who had threatened Gilbert Langley, when the short movable steps were drawn from beneath him and he was precipitated headlong into utter darkness and amid piles of rattling metal.

The clinking heaps of metal among which he had been so violently precipitated seemed to hold thousands of sharp projections which bruised his flesh and benumbed his senses.

His forehead had sustained a painful collision with some jagged substance. He could feel the warm blood oozing from the wound and dripping over his face, and then for several minutes he must have been unconscious. When he fully

realized what had happened the broad daylight was shining against a small window near him.

By the light Phil had a clear view of his surroundings.

The place was a sort of a loft about eight feet square and barely high enough for one to stand erect therein.

The floor was littered with fragments of sheet iron roofing, and the pile of metal upon which he had fallen proved to be a length of chain.

The window was a single pane of glass set in a small door opening upon the roof.

The door was padlocked; and the door from which the ladder had been drawn away had closed at the same instant, apparently by some spring arrangement.

To force the padlock and let himself out upon the roof was not a difficult matter, and he soon gained the street.

This accomplished, he surveyed the building itself.

The junk shop was not yet opened for the day's business; and as he peered into the open hallway he saw that the floors above were untenanted.

To effect such a dodge, the man must have been familiar with the building and acquainted with the fact of its being vacant.

This point Phil regarded as an additional clue which would help ultimately to his detection.

He had not the slightest doubt of the man being Kerry Kroh—the subtle and cunning rascal for whose apprehension and arrest a small fortune was offered in the way of rewards.

But if he were Kerry Kroh, who then was the individual Phil had tracked from the hotel to the alley between the lofty tenements?

While he was pondering upon the mystery he arrived at the hotel.

Early as it was, Gilbert Langley had already departed.

"He was in high dudgeon; he blames the hotel management for the robberies," the clerk said to the detective.

"The robberies!"

Phil could not repress the exclamation in his astonishment.

"Nearly every guest in the house has lost some kind of valuables. The thief couldn't have chosen a better night for operations; we had two hundred people here who had come from country towns, either merchants to buy goods for the fall trade or rich young rustics who had come to see the sights."

"Have you any suspicions as to the thief?"

"Mr. Langley had. Upon certain information we received from him we have caused the arrest of Harry Halsey—a young fellow who claims to be a law student, and who has had a room in the house for the last few weeks."

"Did Mr. Langley mention having been assaulted by a big, roughly dressed fellow, who escaped by clambering down the workmen's scaffolding?"

"Sure! He thinks, and we all think, that the man who escaped down the scaffolding must be young Halsey's accomplice."

"What proof is there against Halsey?"

"A magnificent bracelet, belonging to Miss Edith Breen, one of our guests, and a valuable chronometer, which belonged to her father, were discovered in young Halsey's baggage."

"Are they travelers—transient guests?"

"No. Mr. Breen is the invalid in No. 23; his daughter is our telegraph operator. The father has some money—not much. The bracelet was a gift from Mr. Langley."

"Ah!"

"Mr. Langley is madly infatuated with our handsome telegraph operator, but I am afraid she has fixed her fancy upon another."

"Halsey?"

"You have guessed it."

While Phil was questioning the hotel clerk, a singular thought was forming in his brain.

If the thought was correct, the two silver links might prove a more important clue than he had supposed.

And it might also be a clue to establish the innocence of Halsey.

"Where can I see Mr. Langley?"

The clerk could not inform Kelly.

Mr. Langley had not left any address.

"Perhaps Miss Breen may know," the clerk said.

Miss Breen at the moment was sitting with her invalid father in a handsomely furnished private parlor.

As Kelly stopped at their door he could not help starting, when his ears caught words which were but the echo of his own thoughts.

"It is all a plot—a plot to disgrace Harry in your sight and in mine," Edith was saying to her father.

But the young lady had no definite suspicions.

She was convinced that her lover had some enemy who had sought to injure him; but who the enemy might be, she could not conjecture.

But neither she nor her father had any knowledge of Mr. Langley's movements.

"If you wish to see him, you would be apt to find him at his place of business, I should think," said Mr. Breen, repeating the street and number which the hotel clerk had mentioned.

In less than an hour afterward Phil ascertained that neither Gilbert Langley nor any person of his description was known at that number or in that street.

In attempting to trace him by means of his baggage, Kelly was foiled also.

His trunks had been taken away in a light wagon, which the hotel people supposed he used for business purposes; and he had driven the horse himself.

Phil learned later in the day that he had hired the conveyance at a livery stable not far away, and that he had already returned it.

It would seem that when Gilbert Langley left

the hotel he had made his arrangements with the purpose of concealing his whereabouts.

Phil's next move in the case was to shadow the tenements where Mr. Langley's mysterious midnight visitor had disappeared.

Several days passed without any result from his surveillance. He was beginning to think that he was only wasting valuable time when, late one evening, he saw the fellow emerging from the alley.

He manifested more defiance than alarm when he understood that Phil meant to take him into custody.

"If Langley has done this, he'll be sorry for it," he growled.

"Can you tell me where Gilbert Langley is?"

"I can't. I only wish I knew."

"Have you any acquaintance with an individual known as Kerry Kroh?"

The man started, and flashed an astonished and frightened glance into Kelly's face.

"Are you after Kerry?"

"He will be snug in a stone cage before many hours. This is the clue which has betrayed him," said Phil, producing one of the fatal silver links.

The fellow whistled softly.

"It's a bit of Kerry's watch chain, sure. He made it of silver half-dimes with his jack-knife. It's something of the kind he was always doing. A rare head and clever fingers Kerry has."

The fellow evidently believed that Kerry Kroh was already apprehended, for he instantly became communicative and replied to all Phil's inquiries without the slightest hesitation.

The result of his disclosures was that Kelly turned him over to the authorities to be held as an important witness, and then Phil started once more upon the trail of the man Kroh.

The detective felt fairly certain that a motive stronger than his sense of caution would draw him back to the vicinity of the hotel.

And he was right.

One evening Kelly was loitering about the entrance, when he noticed a tall man saunter up to the plate-glass window behind which sat the telegraph operator.

From his dress he might have been a country clergyman; his appearance was that of a stranger in the city, who was inclined to wonder at everything he beheld.

His thick hair was of a blond hue slightly streaked with gray; his big bushy whiskers were of the same description.

He approached the window as if with the intention of addressing Edith; then he shot a furtive glance about him, hesitated and retreated.

Either the girl's charming face possessed a fascination for him, or he was in doubt about sending a message, apparently; for he presently repeated the movement. The detective watched him with interest.

He was satisfied that the man was the cunning Kerry Kroh in one of his many clever disguises.

When the man made a motion to consult his watch, Phil could scarcely restrain his anxiety and sauntered carelessly toward him as he drew from his vest pocket a plain gold timepiece, from the ring of which dangled a broken guard.

The guard was composed of silver links, each one of which was a duplicate of those in Phil's possession.

The detective made a signal to an officer he had stationed within call, and in less time than it takes to record it, had their prisoner securely handcuffed.

"Isn't there some mistake here, gentlemen?" he said, with astonishing coolness.

"We can soon decide that question," Phil answered, as with a sudden motion he relieved him of the disguising wig and beard, and thus revealed the features of Gilbert Langley.

It is needless to state that the name was an alias, that he was none other than the notorious Kerry Kroh.

His midnight visitor was a fellow criminal who had just been released from prison after serving a long sentence.

He had accidentally seen and recognized Langley; and his visit had been made to solicit money from the other.

When his old comrade refused to help him in any way, he had become violent and threatened all sorts of vengeance.

Fearing exposure, Langley had at once determined to change his quarters; he knew Phil to be a detective and he had planned to throw him off the trail.

With that purpose he had assumed the appearance of his burly, roughly dressed and sandy-bearded visitor, and had led Kelly the long chase ending in his being trapped in the loft over the junk shop.

He had then returned to the hotel, and made his preparations for immediate departure.

With his knowledge of the house he had easily effected the robbing of the guests.

Then he had placed Mr. Breen's chronometer and Edith's bracelet where the articles were discovered, for the purpose of diverting suspicion, and of disgracing the young man whom the girl preferred before himself.

It was with the hope of yet persuading Edith to be his wife that he had ventured back to the scene of his robbery, where he was captured.

The burglary, which had first put Phil on his track, was also clearly proved to have been committed by Kroh.

And he is still undergoing the penalty of his many offenses.

Of course Harry Halsey was speedily released; and shortly afterward he became the husband of Edith.

However, the case might have ended far less happily for them, only for the clue of "The Two Silver Links."

The Yellow Teacup

By MARY MALLORY FISH

POSSIBLY the name of the station was Camwood, or Tamwood, Detective Rice was not certain which without referring to notes upon which just at present it would be difficult to place in hand.

But I remembered the date distinctly.

It was January 10, 1920.

They wired to New York for Nick Rice the instant they found that old Peter Van Benthuysen king of a dozen railroads, was actually dead.

This was at the suggestion of Messrs. McCarnegie and Sloan, who were with him in the room at the little hotel at Camwood—we'll have to call it Camwood—at the time he died.

It was an exceedingly trying position for both of these gentlemen, inasmuch as each was the president of a rival trunk line, and both had for years been bitter enemies of the old millionaire who died, so to speak, in their very arms.

"I won't move a peg from this house nor open my mouth to any one until we have Dr. Muytonhead down to ascertain the cause of death and Rice the detective to see if the criminal—if there be a criminal—can be found."

That was what Mr. Sloan said, and it need surprise no one, inasmuch as Nick as been confidential detective of his railroad for years.

Now the telegram was an exceedingly indefinite one, and what is more, it came too late to enable Rice to catch the first train stopping at Camwood.

Dr. Muytonhead was more fortunate, and went down on the train before Nick, having a good three hours' start.

When the train pulled up at the Camwood station, Nick thought at first there had been some mistake, for it was nothing more than a shanty in the very heart of the forest, through which they had been running for a half-hour or more.

Rice was not disguised.

He thought no one could possibly know him in Camwood, so where was the use?"

He fully expected to find that the affair was simply death by heart disease or apoplexy—for Peter Van Benthuysen was eighty years old and over—and Nick mentally resolved to make Sloan pay roundly for bringing him out into the backwoods of Pennsylvania in the dead of winter, a journey which he did not relish at all.

He was staring about rather stupidly to give the man the courage to address him, in the first place, for he came up to Nick almost at once—a big fellow with reddish hair and a long red beard dressed in the height of fashion—and asked if Rice was going up to the hotel.

"Because if you are," he added, "I shall be pleased to show you the way. The road is muddy from the recent thaw, and unless one looks sharp he is liable, on a night as dark as this, to find himself floundering in a ditch."

Of course Nick thanked the man and accepted his escort, and they started through the woods together, splashing in mud ankle-deep, in the direction of the Camwood Hotel.

Now Nick took a liking to his new companion at once.

As they walked along he told the officer that his name was Eaton; that he was a drummer for Potter & Clay, the great china house, on Barclay street, and that he had come down to the station to look for his sample trunks, which for some mysterious reason had failed to arrive.

It seemed a good opportunity to post himself, and Rice took advantage of it.

For the first time in his life he told his name and business to an entire stranger, and asked for what information he possessed concerning the sudden death of Mr. Van Benthuysen at the Camwood Hotel.

It appeared that after a war of rates which had existed between the rival trunk lines, presided over by Messrs. Van Benthuysen, McCarnegie, and Sloan, for more than two years, a proposition for a settlement had at last been made.

It came from McCarnegie, and to avoid all possibility of the newspaperss getting wind of the conference, it was agreed to hold it at this obscure point on one of the lines, each of the railway kings having arrived at Camwood the evening before.

It had been too late to talk that night, and not until nine o'clock the next morning did the conference take place.

The millionaires met at breakfast in a private room.

Feeling cold, old Peter Van Benthuysen—who always drank tea at breakfast—set his cup upon a little table by the fire and moved his chair close to the stove, Messrs. McCarnegie and Sloan remaining at the table some three feet away.

Suddenly the old millionaire was seen to set his cup down and press both hands to his breast.

His eyes closed and his head fell forward.

He died uttering a single groan.

McCarnegie was at his side with a glass of water in an instant.

It was too late.

The man of many millions was already dead.

Such was the version of the affair given by the china-drummer in the woods. Rice had it corroborated to the letter from the lips of Mr. Sloan upon his arrivaal at the hotel.

"See here, Rice, this is a tremendous bad

box McCarnegie and I have got into," he said, taking Nick aside. "You see we both of us have every interest in old Van Benthuysen's death, for it has been through his stubbornness that both our roads have been heavy losers for the last two years. Not for worlds would I have it get to the newspapers, or we will find ourselves set down as assassins before we know where we are."

"Do you know the cause of death?" asked the detective.

"That is only too plain," replied Mr. Sloan. "Dr. Muytenhead has made a careful examination of the body, and pronounces it prussic acid beyond the shadow of a doubt."

Now, as a rule, Rice has but little confidence in doctors, but he hadn't talked five minutes with Dr. Muytenhead before he became convinced that he was right.

He was Mr. Van Benthuysen's family physician, and had, together with the local doctor, made an immediate post mortem, which demonstrated most conclusively that prussic acid, and nothing else, could have caused death in this particular case.

But by whose hand had the poison been administered?

Suspicion pointed toward the two railway kings, of course, and it drove them almost wild.

"It's ten thousand dollars in your pocket from me," whispered Mr. Sloan, "and McCarnegie instructs me to offer you the same from him if you can solve the mystery surrounding Mr. Van Benthuysen's death."

You may well believe that Nick Rice set to work with a will.

When he visited the room in which the tragedy had occurred he found everything remaining precisely as it had been left in the morning.

There were the dishes on the table at which Messrs. McCarnegie and Sloan had sat, and even the teacup out of which the dead man had drunk still stood in its saucer upon the little table by the side of the stove. The detective picked up the cup and examined it attentively.

It was of the finest china, and was painted a bright yellow, both inside and out, which struck him as a little strange, inasmuch as tea-cups even if colored on the outside are generally white within.

"Of course you have examined this cup for traces of the poison?" he remarked to Dr. Muytonhead, who accompanied him.

"Certainly, Mr. Rice. It was one of my first duties. It was I who restored it to its original position in order that you might find things just as they were."

"And you found?"

"Nothing."

"No trace of prussic acid?"

"None whatever."

"Then it must have been in the tea which Mr. Van Benthuysen drank from this cup."

"There can be no question about that, but you see prussic acid is so exceedingly volatile that an instant's exposure to the action of the air must have evaporated any drops which possibly remained."

"Not even the smell would be left behind?"

"Not even the smell. Oh, there's no doubt that the prussic acid was poured into the tea—no doubt whatever about that."

"Look here," said the detective, "who poured that tea?"

"Poured it himself," answered McCarnegie.

"Did either of you drink any?" added Nick, seeing that upon the table were two other yellow tea-cups precisely like the one which he still held in his hand.

"I did. Sloan drank coffee."

"And neither of you were affected?"

"Not in the least. That's just where the mystery comes in."

Well, it was a mystery.

When Rice learned, after the most careful inquiry, that the tea had been made by an old colored woman who had been cook at the Camwood Hotel for twenty years, and who never heard of Peter Van Benthuysen in her life, it did not enlighten matters much; nor was it any clearer when he found that there was only one druggist in Camwood, who positively swore that he had never even seen prussic acid during his entire business career.

This Rice learned early the following morning. Leaving the druggist's he determined to catechize the landlord once more, and started back for the hotel.

"Look here, neighbor," said he drawing the man aside, "your reputation and the reputation of your house is ruined if light is not shed on this affair before long. Now, rack your brains and see if you can't remember something that will answer for a clew."

"Now look you here, Mr. Detective," replied the landlord, emphatically, "I haven't been keeping public house here in Camwood these forty years, an' my father before me, to feel afraid of my reputation now. I understand this thing well enough, and so do you. You wouldn't pick up a clew if it lay under your very nose."

"What's the reason I wouldn't?"

"Why, because you are in the employ of them railroad nobs—that's the reason. That there tea was all right when I set it on the table with my own hands. I'll swear to it on a stack of Bibles as high as the meetin' house, and you know it as well as me."

"You served the tea with your own hands?"

"Of course I did."

"And how about the tea-cups? Who placed those on the table?"

Nick saw the landlord's face suddenly change.

"Why, you see, kunnel," answered the landlord, still exhibiting much disturbance, "twas kinder funny about them tea-cups. He says to me, says he, say, landlord, I know them fellers what came last night, they're three of the richest

old guys in the United States. Them white tea-cups of yourn ain't the thing for them to drink out'n. Let me make you a present of three of my fine china samples. Here—you're busy, I'll just slip into the breakfast room an' place them myself, an' he whips out them yaller tea-cups, runs into the breakfast room and places them afore I fairly knowed what he was about."

"Who did?" demanded Rice in a breathless whisper.

"Why, that there china drummer, Eaton."

"Eaton! Do you know him?"

"Not from a crow. It's his first trip into into these parts, kunnel, far's I know."

"Where is he now?"

"Oh, he left for York last evenin' on the midnight train!"

Did Dr. Muytenhead tell you that, Mr. Rice?" asked Balthazer Ilges, the celebrated analytical chemist, holding the yellow tea cup from which old Peter Van Benthuysen had drank his death. "Because if he did, he is a fool."

"He certainly so called it, Mr. Ilges," Nick replied. "That is, if my momory serves me rightly, and I'm quite sure it does."

"I am more than surprised. I had formed a higher opinion of Dr. Muytenhead's scientific knowledge. His name should be muttonhead, if he told you that traces of prussic acid instantly disappear by evaporation upon exposure to the air. Any school-boy knows better than that."

Now, as Nick didn't know what "any schoolboy" was supposed to know, it struck him that the best thing he could do about that time was to hold his tongue.

You see he had "colored" the yellow tea cup, to use a common but expressive phrase.

He had formed his own doubts as to the extent of Dr. Muytenhead's chemical knowledge, and Ilges, who had been a pupil of the great Fresinius, he determined to submit the yellow tea cup to for his inspection before making another move.

The fact was that he had reduced the Van Benthuysen case down to four propositions:

1. The railway magnate had been assassinated.

2. He had come to his death through prussic acid.

3. The poison must have been in some way concealed in the cup before the tea went into it.

4. The poisoner must have been a stranger in Camwood, and must also have had some direct end to accomplish by the death of the aged millionaire.

From these propositions what deductions were to be drawn?

The china drummer, Eaton, who had placed the cups on the table in such a singular manner, was one very important deduction.

Rice wanted Mr. Eaton, and without communicating the nature of his suspicions to any one—not even to Messrs. McCarnegie & Sloan, he started to follow up his steps.

The officer found that the man bought a ticket for New York, taking a berth in the sleeper of the midnight train.

He carried with him a canvas grip-sack, trimmed with red leather, which was placed under the berth.

Without the slightest difficulty Nick traced both man and grip-sack to the ferry at Jersey City—the terminus of the road—but not a step further could he go.

During a whole day the fellow had remained at the hotel watching the result of his work; but for Nick's stupidity in disclosing his name and business, he might even now be within the clutches of the law.

The detective confessed to but little hope of ever finding him, but took the yellow tea cup up four flights of stairs to Balthazar Ilges' laboratory to get his opinion, determined to make the best fight he could.

Now the opinion rendered by Mr. Ilges was somewhat startling.

There were traces of prussic acid to be found in the yellow tea cup.

The traces were mingled with some sugary substance and also with yellow paint.

"The acid was not poured into the cup in its pure state," added Mr. Ilges, as he proceeded to explain. "It was mixed with something else. Possibly the sugar which went into the tea."

Already the newspapers had got wind of the affair, the issues of the night before—especially the labor organs—coming out with flaring headings, hinting all sorts of things in relation to the two millionaires.

From the chemist's he hurried to the office of Twistum & Mixer, the attorneys of the dead millionaire.

Armed with a letter from Mr. Sloan, Rice was at once admitted to Mr. Twistum's confidence, who answered his inquiries with all frankness.

"Who benefits by the death of Mr. Van Benthuysen?" was the first question.

"Three persons," was the lawyer's reply.

"And those are?"

A niece, to the extent of a million; a cousin receives a matter of $500,000, and the entire remainder goes to Jack Sands, his step-son—son of his wife by a previous marriage—Mr. Van Benthuysen, though twice wedded, had no children of his own."

The next question was to find this Jack Sands.

Inquiry at the gloomy mansion on Fifth avenue, where the body, brought down from Camwood the night before, now lay in solemn state, brought the information that Mr. Sands was a young man of Bohemian tastes, and instead of residing with his step-father, as one would naturally have supposed would be the case, lived instead at the —— Hotel, one of the most expensive houses in New York.

Everything depended upon Rice making no false step.

He hurried to his costumer's on the Bowery,

emerging from his shop half an hour later dressed like an old, well-to-do farmer, with bald, gray wig, fob-chain and seals, a black felt hat, high collar, old-fashioned black stock, and a pair of steel-bowed spectacles with eyes as large as the old style copper cents.

Then he walked to the —— Hotel, and finding to his great satisfaction that his man was in, wrote the name Caleb Struthers on a card and sent it up to his room.

A moment later he was requested to come upstairs.

"Come in," roared a frank, manly voice in response to his somewhat timed rap.

The detective opened the door, stepped into the apartment, and this is what he saw:

A young man of not more than twenty-five, with brown curly hair and smoothly shaven face, save for a light mustache upon the upper lip; in his shirt-sleeves and wearing slippers, seated carelessly upon a table facing me, one foot resting upon the floor, the other upon a chair, upon the back of which he lightly pressed his hands.

Upon the table were scattered papers and writing materials; there were also scraps of torn paper upon the floor.

Still another thing attracted the detective's attention the instant he entered the room.

This was an open grip-sack which lay in a corner among a pile of books and papers.

It was of canvas, and bound with red leather on the back and corners, precisely as the grip-sack carried by the china drummer, Eaton, had been.

"Well, sir, what can I do for you?" the young man demanded, pleasantly, at the same time fixing upon Rice as keen a pair of gray eyes as he had ever seen.

It was Eton, the china drummer.

Rice knew his voice at once, yet he never betrayed the agitation he felt, but simply closed the door quietly and advanced into the room.

"My keard gave you my name, squire," Nick replied, assuming as fine a backwoods accent as he could muster. "Mebbe you'll think it kinder intrusive, my callin' here; but, ye see, I come down to York on an app'intment with your father, Mr. Van Benthuysen. They tell me he's dead, so I come to you."

"All very well, but what's your business?"

"Why, yer see, squire, I live up to Jericho, in York State. Your father writ me a while ago regardin' the purchase of some of my land for a railroad station in our town. I wouldn't sell then, but later on I changed my mind an' thought I would, so I jest writ yer father an' he told me to come down to town an' meet him today at ten o'clock."

"Whoever sent you here must have been a fool," he replied, dropping the chair and rising from the table. "I know no more about my father's affairs than the man in the moon."

"I meant no harm, squire."

"Well, I don't suppose you did," he replied, a strange light appearing in his eyes. "And there's no harm done. Since you are here, suppose you join me in a drink?"

"Proud to drink with you, squire. A little good whisky, if you've got it, will do for me."

"And for me, too," he answered, stepping to a wash-stand and producing a bottle from the cupboard beneath. "Here is whisky, and here are glasses. Confound it—that settles them."

Awkwardly—most too awkwardly he had knocked two thin glasses from the wash-stand with his elbows. They fell to the floor, breaking.

"No matter," he added, quickly, as he stepped to a closet. "I have two tea cups here which will do just as well and save me the trouble of ringing for a servant. Now, then Jericho, I'm about to pour—it rests with you to say when."

They were yellow tea cups, of the precise pattern that had graced the breakfast table of the millionaires at the Camwood Hotel.

Nick had no notion of affording him the pleasure of having a dead detective at his feet the moment the tea cup passed his lips.

He received the tea cup and Sands even went so far as to raise it to his lips.

Then, as Sands was in the act of tossing off his own draught, Nick sprang suddenly forward, revolver in hand, dashing the yellow tea cup to the floor.

"Hold, Jack Sands! Your game is ended," Nick cried. "Than those yellow tea cups I ask no better proof! Quick! throw up your hands."

"A detective! I knew it!" was all he muttered in his despair.

His hands went up.

The right grasped a bull-dog revolver.

It touched his temple, and before Nick had time to realize what he was about a sharp report rang out, and Jack Sands lay dead on the floor.

The yellow tea cup did it.

But for that Rice never would have been able to fix the death of Mr. Van Benthuysen upon his stepson in the world.

They tried to make out that he was crazy—that insanity ran in his mother's family—but when Nick came to find that he had prepared three of these tea cups with a pasty substance, fitted into the bottom, largely impregnated with prussic acid and painted to represent the china itself, I could entertain no such idea.

Sands got tired of waiting for his step-father to die, and so he hurried him off. That was all there was to it.

As we know, hot tea did just as well.

Nick felt sorry for the Van Benthuysen family, but he received the warmest congratulations from Messrs. McCarnegie & Sloan.

More than that, he received the $20,000 reward.

And, indeed, when he came to trace up the past of Mr. Jack Sands, and to expose a long career of dissipation and crookedness, he felt little sympathy for the fellow.

He had played a bold game and he had lost.

The Meaning of Dreams

TEETH.—To dream you lose a tooth denotes the loss of some friend by death, and that troubles and misfortunes are about to attend you; to the lover, it shows the loss of your sweetheart's affection.

THUNDER AND LIGHTNING.—To dream you hear thunder or see lightning is a very good dream; it denotes success in trade; good crops to the farmer, and a speedy and happy marriage to the lover; if you are soliciting a place, you will obtain it; if you have a lawsuit it will go in your favor; it also indicates speedy news from a far distant country.

TOADS.—To dream you see the venomous reptiles argues evil to the dreamer; they show enemies and disappointment among friends; to the lover, it denotes infidelity in your sweetheart; in trade, loss by swindlers and spoiling of goods. To dream you kill a toad denotes that you will overcome an enemy and discover a person who is robbing you, and in whom you place great confidence.

TOMBS.—To dream of being amongst tombs denotes a speedy marriage, a great success in business, and the gaining of a law-suit; also the birth of children and unexpected news.

TREASURE.—To dream you find a treasure in the earth is very ominous; it shows that you will be betrayed by some one whom you make your bosom friend; that your sweetheart is unfaithful and grossly deceives you; if you should not be able to carry it away, then it denotes that you will have some very heavy loss; that if you have a law-suit, it will go against you by the treachery of your attorney, and that you will be waylaid by robbers, who will ill-treat you.

TREES.—To dream you see trees in blossom denotes a happy marriage with the present object of your affections and many children, who will do extremely well in life; to the tradesman, it denotes success in business; and to the sailor, pleasant and lucrative voyages. To dream you are climbing trees, denotes that you will make a fortune, and rise to honors and dignities in the state. To dream you are cutting down trees foretells heavy losses by trade and by sea; and also the death of a near relation or dear friend.

TURNIPS.—To dream of being in a turnip field, or that you see this wholesome vegetable, denotes acquisition of riches and high employments in the state; to the lover they argue great fidelity and an exceeding good temper in your sweetheart, and that if you marry you will be very happy, have fine children and thrive in the world.

TRUMPET.—To dream you hear the sound of a trumpet is a bad omen and denotes troubles and misfortunes; to the tradesman it presages the loss of business; to the farmer, bad crops; to the lover, insincerity in the object of his affections.

WALLS.—To dream you are walking on crazy old and narrow walls denotes that you will engage in some very dangerous enterprise that will cause you much trouble and vexation; if you get down without hurting yourself, or the walls falling, then you will succeed; if the wall should fall whilst you are upon it, you will be disappointed; if you are walking between walls, and the passage is very narrow and difficult, you will be engaged in some quarrel or other disagreeable affair, from which it will require great circumspection and caution on your part to disengage yourself, but if you get from between them safe, you will, after some difficulties, settle well in life, marry an agreeable partner, have children, and become rich and happy.

WALKING.—To dream you are walking in a dirty, muddy place, foretells sickness and vexation; to the lover, it denotes your sweetheart to be bad tempered and unfaithful; to the tradesman, it foretells dishonest servants and loss of goods by fire.

WATER.—To dream you are drinking water denotes great trouble and adversity; in trade, loss of business and being arrested; to the lover, it shows your sweetheart is false, prefers another, and will never marry you.

WATER-MILL.—To dream of being in a water-mill is a favorable omen; to the tradesman, it denotes great increase of business; to the farmer, abundant crops; in love, success, a rich sweetheart, and a happy marriage.

WEDDING.—To dream of being married, or at a wedding, is a very unfavorable dream, especially for lovers; it denotes the death of some dear friend or relation, with loss of property and severe disappointments.

WHEAT.—To dream you see, or are walking in a field of wheat, is a very favorable omen, and denotes great prosperity and riches; in love, it argues a completion of your most sanguine wishes and foretells much happiness, with fine children when you marry; if you have a law-suit, you will gain it, and you will be successful in all your undertakings.

(To be continued)

Current News

LIGHTS PIPE WITH ICICLES

Clate Reese, of Plugville, Potter County, Ia., is a "regular wizard," according to a correspondent. He lights his pipe with icicles. This is how he does it: He takes the icicle, dips it in gasoline, then into the stove, and—presto! the ice will burn till the "gas" burns off.

MOTORCYCLIST BRAVES DEATH VALLEY

An achievement that is unequaled in motoring history was performed this month by John E. Hogg of Los Angeles when in the interests of three large railroad companies he made a tour of Death Valley on a middleweight machine. The trip, which is a hazardous one at any time of the year, because of the utter absence of distinguishable trails, the great distance between water holes and prowling packs of coyotes, was accomplished by Hogg and his little machine without a single mishap. He covered over 800 miles on the floor of Death Valley itself, which is the greatest depression on the face of the earth, with the exception of the Dead Sea region in Palestine.

OCEAN'S BED COVERED BY METEORITES' DUST

To an enormous extent the bed of the ocean is covered with lava and pumice stone. Still more remarkable is it to find the floor of the ocean covered in many parts with the dust of meteorites.

These bodies whirl about in the heavens like miniature comets and are for the most part broken into innumerable fragments.

We are all familiar with these heavenly visitants as shooting stars; but it has been only lately discovered that this cosmic dust forms layers at the bottom of the deepest seas.

Between Honolulu and Tahiti, at a depth of 2,350 fathoms—over two miles and a half—a vast layer of this material exists.

Falling upon land this impalpable dust is indistinguishable, but, accumulating for centuries in the sea depths, it forms a wondrous story of the continuous bombardment of this planet by ometery bodies.

STOLEN 18 YEARS AGO, FINDS HER OLD HOME

After years of fruitless search by relatives, Luna Virginia Joyner, who mysteriously disappeared eighteen years ago when she was five years old, has returned to her relatives at Blackstone, Va.

When the little girl, whose home was near Church Hill, in Dinwiddie County, disappeared, bloodhounds were put on her trail and it was established that she had been stolen. After she had been gone eight months her mother died of grief. It was thought a negro woman had stolen the child and sold her to gypsies.

On January 18 Chief of Police Sherry received a letter from Mrs. Zella Earl Pickard of Tonawanda, N. Y., asking for any information he could give about the case. She had received a letter from "an interested stranger," saying that "if you are interested write to Police Headquarters, Richmond, Va." In her letter Mrs. Pickard said:

"I was brought up by a woman circus rider and up to eight years ago thought she was my mother. After she told me she was not I left her. I have often asked her who my parents were, but she never told me."

Chief Sherry located a brother and sister of the missing girl, and finally Mrs. Pickard came to Blackstone, where her sister was living, and has proved her identity.

It appears that the child was taken north and there turned over to a circus woman. She was taught to be a performer and was at one time a featured rider with the Robinson circus. In the circus she met W. T. Pickard, a sea lion trainer, and they were married. Mrs. Pickard has two children.

METEOR FALLS IN OKLAHOMA

Geologists will study the huge meteor which fell and burned itself out near Okmulgee, Okla., the other night after lighting the skies over several southwestern States. Hundreds of persons in Missouri, Kansas, Arkansas and Oklahoma watched the meteor's flight, reports received here said. Scores of motor cars clogged the roads leading to where the burning mass fell.

Considerable apprehension among the people living near Fort Smith, Ark., was caused. They thought the meteor fell near Red Oak, Ark., about twenty-five miles distant. A number of persons in automobiles went from Wilburton, Okla., and nearby towns to Red Oak to give aid.

Tulsa, Okla., reported that when the meteor passed over that city it appeared to be within a few hundred yards of the earth and that the lower and heavier portion, of a greenish blue color, was followed by a long wedge-shaped tail. As it approached the earth, the report stated, the head remained together as a mass. During the last few seconds of the fall the southern sky was lighted with a blue-green flash.

C. B. Smith, an astronomic authority at Muskogee, said he believed the meteor was thrown off from a destroyed planet between Jupiter and Mars, as it appeared to travel from west to east.

CONTROLLING FLOWER COLORS

It is generally known that the colors of vegetation vary in intensity in direct ratio to the amount of sunlight, combined with coolness of temperature, within certain limits. Examples are the intense redness of apples grown in northern climates and the deep colors of Alpine vegetation. But the soil and other influences also have an effect upon plant colors.

Experiments have been made upon the artificial control of colors of plants through the introduction of chemicals into the soil they grow in. In very small quantities such chemicals are absorbed without apparent injury, but the effect upon the colors is slight. Yellow roses, for instance, appear to become deeper in color under the influence of aluminum sulphate and potassium sulphate. With the use of these same chemicals the petals of the white carnation show a tendency to develop red streaks, whereas when fed with ammonium sulphate, aluminum sulphate, iron citrate and citric acid, scarlet carnations tend to form white streaks.

MOTHER SHIPTON'S PROPHECY

Mother Shipton's Prophecy was a clever hoax, the production of a joking newspaper man, Charles Hindley, of Brighton, England, who published it about the year 1862. He then claimed that it was a reissue of a prediction originally announced by a Mother Shipton in the year 1488, and republished in 1641. Hindley, about the year 1873, confessed that he was the originator of the hoax. Here is the famous prophecy, as several of our readers have requested us to print it:

"Carriages without horses shall go,
And accidents fill the world with woe
Around the world thoughts shall fly
In the twinkling of an eye.
Waters shall yet more wonders do—
How strange, yet they shall be true.
The world upside down shall be,
And gold be found at roots of tree.
Through hills man shall ride,
And no horse nor ass shall be at his side.
Under water men shall walk,
Shall ride, shall sleep, shall talk.
In the air men shall be seen
In white, in black, in green.
Iron in the water shall float
As easy as a wooden boat.
Gold shall be found, and shown,
In a land that's not now known.
Fire and water shall wonders do;
England shall at last admit a Jew.
The world to an end shall come
In eighteen hundred and eighty-one."

MOVING A WHOLE TOWN SITE

The thriving little town of Hibbing is being bodily moved to a new site a mile away. Situated in the heart of the iron district of Minnesota and surrounded by huge chasms and ore pits, the town must make way for extensive mining operations by the United States Steel Corporation. There are valuable ore deposits under the buildings and streets. All frame buildings in good condition already have been transferred to the new site, and brick buildings are now being moved. Structures that are in poor condition are being torn down. About eighty dwellings, twelve frame buildings and eight brick business blocks are to be moved. Forty thousand yards of wood paving block will be taken up and laid down in the streets of the new location. Lamp posts, electric light poles and wires, hydrants, fire alarm boxes and trees on the boulevards will all go from the old town to the new.

The moving has been done by steam log rollers and tanks of the caterpillar type. These seem to be the most satisfactory means, although garages and other small buildings have been moved with tractors. Among buildings erected by the United States Steel Corporation in the new location are a $350,000 hospital and a $350,000 hotel. A new power plant, including a municipal heating system, is nearly completed at an estimated cost of $1,000,000, and before many months a modern town will have been made of the old mining settlement.

MAKE MONEY AS YOU WAIT

Detective Sergeant James J. Gegan, with Detectives Cooper and Newman of the Bomb Squad, recently arrested Martin Kaleja, of 2735 West Fifth street, Coney Island, and Stanley Wailkus, of 22 Scholes street, Brooklyn, on suspicion of engaging in a swindling scheme. They are suspected of having defrauded Mary Petrowski, of 122 Hough avenue, Bridgeport, Conn., out of $3,200 on August 9, last.

According to Sergeant Gegan the men brought a box with an electrical contrivance to the Bridgeport woman's home and made her believe that the instrument could change tissue paper into dollar bills. They induced her to lend them $3,200, which they promised to duplicate. Then, according to Gegan, they placed the money in the box, which had a false bottom, and the lights in the room were turned out. When they were turned on again the woman was told her original money and the new money could be taken from the box the next day. They warned her against opening it sooner, because the ink on the greenbacks was still wet.

The following day when the woman opened her "private mint" she found nothing but a roll of tissue paper with a dollar bill on each end. The detectives say other victims of the "private mint" manufacturers include Joseph Norwitch, of 676 Wales avenue, the Bronx, who on May 18 lost $2,250; Anthony Borris, of 270 South street, Brooklyn, who lost $700 last July, and Mrs. Charles Borbley, of 25 Beacon street, Newark, who lost $1,300.

GERMAN MONKS IN SMUGGLING DEAL

The German crime wave engulfs even the pious monks. The Berlin criminal police have bared a gigantic smuggling plot which a Bavarian monastery attempted to execute.

The Monastery of St. Boniface obtained permission to emigrate en masse with its belongings and settle in Switzerland. The Division of Capital Smuggling Surveillance got word that the monastery head, Father Gabriel, had intimate relations with a Berlin Kommerzienrat and two Munich art dealers. Detectives then discovered many huge cases being transported to the monastery shortly before the latter's departure.

Father Gabriel lied like a Trojan at the German customs and declared nothing but the monastery's legitimate property. The German customs officials passed the pious tourists with a perfunctory examination. Then the Berlin sleuths intervened. A thorough search of carloads of monastery baggage disclosed hidden works of art running into millions of marks, including a Rafael, the "Madonna With the Infant Jesus" and "St. John the Baptist."

Further, sewed in mattresses, the sleuths found checks totalling 800,000 marks, as well as stocks and bonds with interest coupons running into the millions. The Rafael alone was valued at 6,000,000 marks.

Father Gabriel was to have split fifty-fifty with the art dealers and the Berlin financier after smuggling the stuff over to Switzerland. Under the third degree Father Gabriel confessed and excused himself by saying that he had suffered heavy losses in making purchases for a nunnery and wanted to recoup his losses by his smuggling profits.

DIES SHOOTING NIAGARA FALLS IN BIG BARREL

Charles G. Stephens, of Bristol, England, was killed at Niagara Falls, N. Y., July 11, when he went over the Horseshoe Falls in a barrel. The cask in which he made the trip, though built of stout Russian oak staves and bound with steel hoops, smashed like an eggshell on the jagged rocks, but Stephens' body has not been recovered. River men say that it may not come to the surface for some time.

Stephens, who boasted the title of "daredevil," was 58 years old and had a wife and eleven children in Bristol, where he was a barber. He served three years in France with the British army. He had planned to make a lecture tour of England if his trip was successful.

Bobby Leach, who went over the Horseshoe Falls in 1911, told Stephens before he started that his trip would be a failure. Leach predicted that the barrel would not withstand the drop of 158 feet, but Stephens refused to be dissuaded from the venture. Leach was among the spectators who watched the start of Stephens' fatal trip.

Few knew that Stephens was to make the trip and when the barrel was towed out into the river on the Canadian side, two miles above the falls, there were only a dozen on hand to watch. It was 8:10 o'clock when Stephens was cast adrift. Early sightseers on Goat Island saw the barrel bobbing up and down in the tumbling reaches of the upper rapids, but none knew that it carried a man about to defy the cataract.

Members of Stephens' party followed the cask downstream in automobiles. In one of the cars a moving picture operator filmed the progress of the barrel. As the barrel drew near the brink of the falls it seemed to stand on end, hesitate a second or two and then slide gracefully over the slope, head foremost, and at a slight angle. Its gleaming black and white stripes could be seen until it had fallen about half way down the face of the cataract. Then it was lost to view in the misty spray.

Men stationed below the falls on the Canadian shore watched the barrel as it fell and prepared to catch it if it floated into the eddy above the Canadian Maid of the Mist landing. It was there that the barrels in which Leach and Mrs. Annie Edison Taylor made the falls trip in former years had been recovered.

A quarter of an hour passed, then a half hour, and an hour. Field glasses trained on the boiling waters at the base of the cataract revealed no sign of the cask. When the hour had passed the old river men in the little group of watchers began to shake their heads dubiously. They remembered that Mrs. Taylor had made the trip in forty-nine minutes and that Bobby Leach was on his way to the loop of the bank in thirty-nine minutes after his barrel had been sent adrift above the falls.

Word that Stephens had tried and failed spread quickly through the two falls cities and great crowds congregated on the banks of the river. Men and women stood packed on the upper steel arch bridge, at Prospect Point and along the Canadian and American shores. It was shortly after noon, four hours after Stephens began his trip, when someone caught sight of a black object in the river near the base of the falls.

"There he is!" a watcher cried, and there was a brief interval of hope that Stephens might have survived the trip.

The barrel designed by Stephens for the trip was six feet three inches high. It had strap arrangements inside and an electric light system. An oxygen tank was carried, which, Stephens said, would keep him alive for several hours if the barrel became caught in a back eddy under the falls.

Stephens is the third to attempt the barrel trip over the falls. Mrs. Annie Edison Taylor went over in October, 1900, in an oak barrel, and Bobby Leach made the trip in July, 1911, in a steel barrel. Both are still living.

PAPER CLOTHES

Having solved the problem of the cost of men's suits, Germany is giving England the benefit of her knowledge. Result: one suit for 60 cents, a suit a week for a year for $31.20. There is only one drawback to this approach to the millennium. They are made of paper.

Quantities of these suits are said to have been ordered from Amsterdam by English wholesale firms. One concern, which has received its first consignment, has bought 40,000 and 10,000 were shipped to India last week.

Several varieties have come over so far. There are morning suits, with black coats and striped trousers, blue "serge" business suits, and a number of patterns of black, white and mixed checks. Dark gray overcoats and boys' sailor suits are also being imported.

Two enterprising newspaper reporters have given the paper clothes a trial. One walked along the Thames embankment in a rainstorm. The bottoms of the trousers soon were splashed with mud and water, which made the beautiful colored check design "run" beyond all recognition. When he put his hands into the trousers pockets he found the material so stiff the coat was lifted off his shoulders.

Both men applied the fire test to the suits, which refused to burn, but smouldered with noisome fumes.

Neither attracted much attention though they walked along fashionable streets, visited the House of Commons and ate in a restaurant.

The suits are advertised as made of the "best class of paper texture." Rain had little effect on them outside of spoiling the colored pattern.

The "cloth" of which they are made has a hard, shiny appearance something like that of brown wrapping paper and the texture is that of fine, closely woven sacking. The cut and fit of the suits leave considerable to be desired unless the wearer has one of those perfect store model figures on which they are cut.

However, after the expected chorus of contemptuous merriment over the suits has run its course, it is believed there will be a considerable demand for them from men who are more concerned with price than style and who might rather pay 60 cents for a suit every week or two than from $50 to $150 a year for the real cloth kind.

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36 "Trailed by a French Detective," by Rene Renaud.
37 "A Drop of Ink," by Lieutenant Robert W. Warden.
38 "The Ten Doctors," by Allan Arnold Fox.
39 "The Stain on Page 61," by Chas. T. Jordan.
40 "A Masked Mystery," by Police Sergeant Kelly.
41 "The Black Soul," by Beulah Poynter.
42 "Sanctuary," by William Hamilton Osborne.
43 "The Mystery of the Seven Shadows," by Charles F. Oursler.
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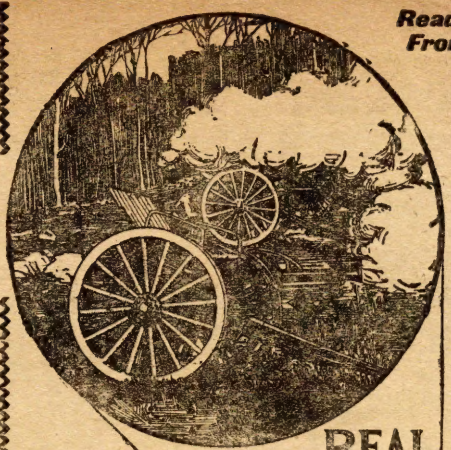
HOW ODOR TRAVELS

The rapid propagation of smells noticed in the open air appears due entirely to currents, since in small tubes, where currents do not exist, the rate is found to be very small. Experiments along this line were first undertaken in England by Prof. Ayrton,

With ammonia diffusing through a tube a meter and a half long, over two hours elapsed before the smell could be detected at the other end of the tube. Using different lengths of tubing, it was found that the time required for the diffusion of the smell was roughly proportioned to the square of the length. Ammonia and hydrogen sulphide were used for these experiments. The presence of ammonia could be detected chemically at a point in a tube after about the same time as when the sense of smell was used for a detector. The rate of propagation of the smell of ammonia was not markedly different when this had to pass along the same tube either horizontally or vertically upward or vertically downward. With camphor, however, while the rates horizontally and downward were about the same, the speed upward was about twice as great.

ABOUT TEMPERING COPPER

The Aztecs, Toltecs and Tarascans, it is said, possessed in prehistoric ages the art of tempering copper. Copper axes and knife blades found at Atcapotzalco are so soft they can be cut with an ordinary pocket-knife. On the other hand, Tarascan copper cutting implements from the Balsas River ruins in Guerrero were so hard that they would turn the edge of a modern knife. Analysis showed that these different blades were of the same composition as the copper ores found in the respective localities. The soft blades were made from comparatively pure copper ores, while the hard, apparently tempered blades from Guerrero, were made from the natural ores which existed in the holls, alloyed with nickel and cobalt; thus making the smelted metal (or alloy) almost as hard as steel. Hence the so-called tempering was due to the natural alloy found in the ore, which when heated and sharpened gave a hard cutting edge. On the other hand, where the ores were practically pure copper, the implements, made from such ores were soft and remain so to this day.



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Shows Clear Pictures

I have been very slow in sending you an answer. I received my Moving Picture Machine a few weeks ago and I think it is a dandy, and it shows the pictures clear just as you said it would. I am very proud of it. I thank you very much for it and I am glad to have it. I gave an entertainment two days after I got it. Leopold Lamontagne, 54 Summer Ave., Central Falls, R. I.

Sold His for $10.00 and Ordered Another

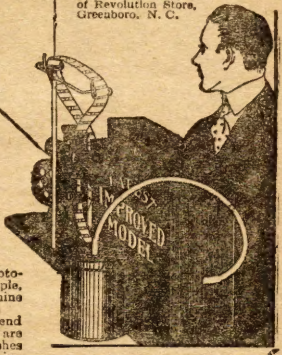
Some time ago I got one of your Machines and I am very much pleased with it. After working it for about a month I sold it for $10.00 to a friend of mine. He has it and entertains his family nightly. I have now decided to get another one of your machines. Michael Eberth, Mandan, N. Dak.

Would Not Give Away for $25.00

My Moving Picture Machine is a good one and I would not give it away for $25.00. It's the best machine I ever had and I wish everybody could have one. Addie Brosky, Jeanesville, Pa. Box 34.

Better Than a $12.00 Machine

I am slow about turning in my thanks to you, but my Moving Picture Machine is all right. have had it a long time and it has not been broken yet. I have seen a $12.00 Machine but would not swap mine for it. Robert Lineberry, care of Revolution Store, Greensboro, N. C.



How You Can Get This Great Moving Picture Machine—Read My Wonderful Offer to You

HERE IS what you are to do in order to get this amazing Moving Picture Machine and the real Moving Pictures: Send your name and address—that is all. Write name and address very plainly. Mail to-day. As soon as I receive it I will mail you 20 of the most beautiful premium pictures you ever saw—all brilliant and shimmering colors. These pictures are printed in many colors and among the titles are such subjects as *"Betsy Ross Making the First American Flag"*—*"Washington at Home,"*—*"Battle of Lake Erie," etc.* I want you to distribute these premium pictures on a special 30-cent offer among the people you know. When you have distributed the 20 premium pictures on my liberal offer you will have collected $6.00. Send the $6.00 to me and I will immediately send you FREE the Moving Picture Machine with complete Outfit and the Box of Film.

50,000 of these machines have made 50,000 boys happy. Answer at once. Be the first in your town to get one.

M. CROFTON, Secy.,
615 W. 43d Street, Dept. 521, New York

PLEASE USE COUPON

Free Coupon

Good for Moving Picture Offer

Simply cut out this Free Coupon, pin it to a sheet of paper, mail to me with your name and address written plainly, and I will send you the 20 Pictures at once. Address

M. CROFTON, Secy.,
615 W. 43d St., Dept. 521, New York

BIG WAGES DON'T PAY

One hundred and forty-eight Swedes, among them thirty women and children, have arrived at Stockholm by steamship from Russia. Workmen in the party were unanimous in saying that it is impossible to live in Soviet Russia. Wages are extravagantly high, but will not buy necessary food and clothing.

The arrivals included a number of Swedish Bolshevist metal workers who, some months ago, set out for Russia amidst the cheers of friends. Some of their countrymen, they say, have been detained in Russia against their will.

The only food ration now distributed, the men report, is half a pound of bread. Fish, horse meat, sugar, butter, tea and other food can only be obtained through illegitimate trading at incredible prices. An income of a thousand rubles a day, one returned worker declared, would not be sufficient to avert hunger. Most industries have practically ceased, the great Putilow works closing months after vain attempts to keep going.

To Men who are Bald or are Losing Their Hair

Let me tell you of my own case.

I was almost completely bald, and as I had tried many tonics, lotions, etc., without benefit, I expected to remain bald for the rest of my life.

But instead of baldness, I now have a complete growth of hair upon my head. This is all the more remarkable because I am 66 years old.

The way that I obtained a perfect hair growth was as simple as it was astonishing to me.

While traveling I met an old Cherokee Indian who gave me a pomade or ointment to use upon my scalp. Although my confidence was meager, I used this compound. He told me it contained selected components from the Three Kingdoms of Nature.

After several applications my looking-glass revealed a slight fuzz. This developed from day to day to a healthy growth of hair. Imagine my satisfaction in being able actually to brush the hair where there had been a bare scalp! Yet it was true. Soon I was able to comb it—and I have been able to do so ever since.

I traded with the old Indian savant, obtaining the recipe. It was crude and the ointment was almost nauseating. So I had it modernized, by a practical chemist, holding to the original principle, and now from the recipe a cosmetic pomade is prepared. Men and women have used it—and many are now doing so. In numerous cases remarkable results are being reported.

This ointment contains no alcohol nor anything else that has a tendency to dry the hair, the scalp or the roots.

The way for you to prove what it will do for you is to try it. I will mail you the recipe free of charge. Your own physician will tell you that it is safe and you may obtain a supply from the druggist. Or you may get it from me. It is called Kotalko. A proof box will be mailed, with the recipe, if you send 10 cents, silver or stamps, to John Hart Brittain, 150 East Thirty-second St., BB-101, New York, N. Y. This is a genuine announcement devoid of the lavish phraseology of the usual advertisements, but it means exactly what it says, and I, being a business man of good reputation, stand ready to prove it to you.

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Reduces 10 to 60 lbs., or more, under $100 GUARANTEE by Korein system. Obtain Oil of Korein at any busy drug store; or write for free brochure to Korein Co., NL-691, Station F, New York City. Become slender by best method. No salts, no thyroid, no starving, no tedious exercising. Delightfully easy, rapid reduction; improves health, symmetry, efficiency; ADD YEARS TO YOUR LIFE! *Become slim and remain so!* REDUCE WEIGHT HAPPILY!

FRECKLES

NOW IS THE TIME TO GET RID OF THESE UGLY SPOTS

There's no longer the slightest need of feeling ashamed of your freckles, as Othine—double strength—is guaranteed to remove these homely spots.

Simply get an ounce of Othine—double strength—from your druggist, and apply a little of it night and morning and you should soon see that even the worst freckles have begun to disappear, while the lighter ones have vanished entirely. It is seldom that more than one ounce is needed to completely clear the skin and gain a beautiful clear complexion.

Be sure to ask for the double strength Othine, as this is sold under guarantee of money back if it fails to remove freckles.

$1 Week

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Have fun and healthful exercise with a bicycle! Own the Black Beauty, the finest bike in the world! No waiting! Just send for catalog, select your model, and we'll ship at once. Pay a small deposit, then $1 a week (or $5 a month). Direct to you at Factory Price.

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Five yr. guarantee, and six mos. insurance on the wheel. The Black Beauty has sporty lines, marvelous steel construction, dazzling finish. Write to-day for Catalog.

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